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IMPERIAL PALACE OF PETROVSKOI, NEAR MOSCOW.

# TRAVELS

IN

# SIBERIA.

BY S. S. HILL, ESQ.

. . . "These unfrequented *wilds*
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns."
*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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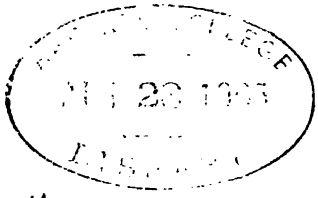

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# PREFACE.

THE following pages contain a narrative of incidents and adventures during travels which occupied three years, and were extended round the world. The reason why this particular portion has been selected for publication is, chiefly that it embraces some account of those countries concerning which the author has found the least genuine information current in Europe, and about which he has been most frequently interrogated since his return.

All the dates have been set down in conformity with the old calendar, because this is exclusively used throughout the Russian empire. But wherever it has appeared especially necessary to avoid error, attention has been called to the difference between the old and the new style. For the same reason, it has been thought advisable to use the thermometer graduated according to the scale of Réaumur, and in matters of importance to refer to the difference between this scale and that of Fahrenheit, which is in use among ourselves.

The apparently extraneous matter which will be found in some of the earlier chapters, has been introduced under the impression that the book would be rather read by those who are unacquainted with the more important institutions of the empire generally,

than by those who are familiar with them, and in the conviction that no portrait of the people could be fairly exhibited to a reader, who might not be acquainted with such of their institutions as in all countries must have more or less contributed to form the national manners and character.

The book appears, under the disadvantage of having been written during peace, and published after the virtual commencement of war with the country of whose inhabitants it solely treats. Yet, as its contents have no relation to changeable and moving events, it will not be mistaken for a publication adapted or intended to suit the present epoch better than any other time. If the style of its composition be found sometimes departing from that simplicity which is doubtless best suited to every mere narrative of events, this must be attributed to the author's great desire to impress upon his readers the true character of what he has endeavoured to describe.

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# TRAVELS IN SIBERIA.

## CHAPTER I.

### JOURNEY FROM MOSCOW TO NIJHNI NOVGOROD.

North-east Suburbs of Moscow.—Views of the City.—Appearance of the Country near the Town.—Residence of a Boyar.—Fellow-passengers.—Vladimir.—General Aspect of the Country.—Nymphs bathing.—Road through a Forest.—Peculiar System of watching.—Forest Inn.—View of Nijhni Novgorod.—Arrival.

On the 29th July, 1847, I left Moscow by diligence for Nijhni Novgorod, accompanied by Mr. Marshal, with whom I had seen a portion of the two Russian capitals. Our immediate purpose, was to visit the grand fair so famous in the commercial history of northern Europe, which is annually held there.

After passing through several paved streets, we entered the most agreeable of the suburbs of the town, where we crossed one of the bridges of the river Jaousa, which enters the city from the north-east, and falls into the Moskva at a short distance beyond the upper walls of the Kremlin.

The whole of the vicinity of this stream in these suburbs exhibits the rarest objects of interest that are, perhaps, any where to be seen within the walls of a city. In passing the bridge, on the left hand appear many villas, which, with the buildings of several public

institutions, adorn the outskirts of the town; and on the opposite hand, upon the banks of the river on both sides, may be seen neat one and two story houses, painted generally white, with green roofs, and with gardens and shrubberies inclosed within railings, presenting altogether one of the most pleasing as well as novel views imaginable.

But if we were gratified with the novel prospect from this site, it bore no comparison with that which presented itself from the rise of a little hill which forms the left bank of the Jaousa. The whole city, crowned by its venerable Kremlin, and displaying its hundreds of gilded and gaily painted domes and cupolas, was here beheld at one view, and, with a foreground of beautiful villas and gardens, presented to us a spectacle unlike in character, and not inferior in interest, to any scene, not indebted to Nature for its grandeur or beauty, that it had been my fortune at any time to behold.

After passing the gate of the outer wall of the city, we came upon an open plain country. Here and there, at different distances, appeared groves of firs and birch-trees, and at intervals, fields sown chiefly with rye, which was in some instances already under the operation of the sickle. But the land seemed everywhere to be but indifferently cultivated.

Our first change of horses was at the small town of Bogorodsk, where we observed nothing differing from what had seemed to characterise all the towns of the inferior class that we had before seen. Soon after this, we passed a princely edifice, situated about half a verst from the road, upon our right hand. It consisted of a low long regular building, with wings united to the centre by handsome colonnades, and was painted with the usual lively colours of bright yellow and light green; and we afterwards learned, that it was the property of a boyar of large estates in this part of the country. The woods

about this building were tastfully planted; but the effect was in some degree spoiled, as is not unfrequently the case with similar edifices in our own country, by a pool of stagnant water in the foreground.

At eight o'clock, we stopped to take tea at an inn at the government post-station in a small village, where we had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of several of our fellow-passengers, who were seated in another department of the diligence, and among whom was Herr Kroff, a German commercial gentleman, from whom we afterwards received many civilities at Nijhni Novgorod.

Our road, upon the second day, was through a fine country, well wooded, and apparently better cultivated than any we had hitherto seen in Russia. At the distance of every eight or ten versts, the soil is here watered by a rivulet, from the banks of which the land every where rises gradually to the height of one or two hundred feet on both sides, and forms a continuous plain, sometimes sufficiently undulated for the traveller to obtain a tolerable view of the immediate country around. At one o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at the city of Vladimir, which is situated in the midst of this productive plain. But we remained here only long enough to take a hasty repast.

This ancient city, since it ceased to be the capital of a grand duchy or principality of Russia, in the early part of the fourteenth century, has gradually declined in wealth and population. It is still, however, the capital of the government of the same name, and remains surrounded by a ditch and earth ramparts, though the number of its inhabitants does not now exceed 7000 souls.

We had no opportunity of observing more of the town, than that its principal street through which

we passed, was spacious, and formed chiefly of houses of brick and stone, but a very few of which were equal in appearance to those of the meaner sort in Moscow.

In the country that we passed through towards the same evening, we observed that the crops of every kind, were more forward than those in the western part of the district; and the rye and barley were generally under the sickle.

Our way, during the early part of the third morning of our journey, lay through a still finer and better-cultivated country than we had yet seen, exhibiting a rich variety of dark groves, green meadows, and extensively cultivated plains. About two hours before noon, we passed the river Oka by a floating bridge; and about noon, we entered a dense fir-forest.

At the moment of reaching this forest, a little scene, slightly illustrative of the primitive condition of the Russian peasantry, afforded us a minute's amusement. There was here a clear and flowing stream; and it happened that the heat of the day, which was excessive, had attracted a party of fair bathers from a neighbouring village, who were sporting in the water and upon the river's banks, just as if this portion of the earth were still a paradise, and the daughters of the land quite unconscious of the necessity or convenience of clothing.

The road through the forest was gloomy, and relieved only occasionally by the presence of a party of wood-cutters. The forest had been the resort of robbers, and was now infested with bears and wolves, from which the roads however were kept tolerably free, by a systematic arrangement for watching, which was quite novel to us. 'At intervals are placed especial guards of the forest, who repose at the height of fifteen or sixteen feet above the ground, upon beds of fir-boughs laid on frames which rest upon four posts, and are protected from the

sun and the rain, by straw roofs or canopies, raised above them. In these frail watch towers, these guards are secure, at least from the attacks of any wild beasts during their hours of repose at night, and they can see the further by day, and judge better of the enemy's strength, before exposing themselves to too unequal a combat. Beneath their beds, or upon stands close at hand, rest spears, resembling boarding-pikes, ready to serve them to combat with the wild beasts when required.

In the centre of the forest, we found a post-inn, at which we stopped to change horses. As soon as we had alighted here, Mr. Marshal and myself approached the door, in search of some refreshments, while the rest of the party dispersed, we knew not whither. But such appeared to be the filthy state of the sole room of which the house seemed to consist, that after peeping in at the door, we could not make up our minds to enter; nor could we get anything to satisfy our appetites, which happened to be most inconveniently good. The inn seemed to be in the possession of three women, whose appearance and demeanour we thought presented the nearest approach to those of the most savage races of our diversified species, that we had ever seen in any country where a post-road was known.

When we found that we could get nothing to eat, and neither tea, nor wine, nor anything to make a refreshing drink of, we asked for some water. This, indeed, they gave us, but neither willingly nor abundantly; and it was so bad, that although we were very thirsty, we could not drink it; so we sat down upon some stumps of trees near at hand, and amused ourselves, by endeavouring to scold our postilion for not having told us on the way, that we were to-day to pass through such a destitute country. But this was not just; for it was our part to have made inquiry concerning the accommo-

dation upon the road, and not his, to have cared for anything but his own necessities and those of his horses.

We were not however to starve, and good was in store for us, of which we had not dreamed, and which our impatience scarcely deserved:

> "Many dream not to find, neither deserve,
> And yet are steep'd in favours."

At a moment, while we were trying to soften the hard hearts of the bad specimen of the *beau sexe* at whose mercy we seemed to be, and who we were convinced had some milk, from having seen a cow in the wood, our travelling companion already mentioned, who was well acquainted with the country, and who had removed with all the other travellers, from the dirt about the house, to the wood upon the opposite side of the road, and made a fire, suddenly summoned us to come and partake of cold fish-pie and hot tea; and we had now a famous feast.

As soon as all our appetites were satisfied, we continued our journey; and, at five o'clock in the evening of the same day, we came in sight of the place of our destination.

The town of Nijhni Novgorod, as we approached it, appeared before us, situated upon elevated ground, upon the south point at the confluence of the rivers Oka and Volga. But the fair is held upon the left bank of the Oka, at about a verst (or three-quarters of a mile) from the point at which its stream unites with the great river of Russia, and immediately opposite to the busier portion of the town, to which its site is connected, at this season of the year, by a floating bridge.

We had to pass through a part of the fair on our way to the town. And what we now thus accidentally and prematurely saw, did not give us a very favourable impression of the character of this curious place of ex-

change. We saw nothing indeed but lines of rough sheds, enveloped in a thick cloud of dust, raised by the men and beasts of burden which were moving from place to place, and which was not a little augmented by our heavy vehicle and the six horses that tramped before it.

My companion expressed his disappointment very strongly, at our having made such a journey to see, as it appeared, a parcel of half wild sheep-skin clad fellows, engaged in exchanging inferior objects of commerce, in a cloud of dust almost too dense to leave the men and their beasts visible at the distance of half a dozen yards.

After crossing the bridge, the diligence stopped, and our German friend left us, and we entered our hotel, where we were fortunate enough to obtain two rooms which were connected by a door between them. We found the windows of both closed; and we were told that we should by no means open them, as the rooms, if we did so, would be instantly filled with dust, of which a dense cloud was even here floating at all heights in the air. Finding, therefore, the heat oppressive, we threw off our coats, and seated ourselves upon our beds to enjoy a little repose.

We had not, however, been many minutes at our ease, before we had a strange visit of congratulation at our safe arrival. While we were calmly talking over the incidents of the journey, with the door between our two rooms standing open, Mr. Marshal's door was violently struck and suddenly burst open, and a gentleman in shirt and trousers rushed in, and with an English hurrah! and the phrase, not less especially English, "D——n it, how are you, my fine fellow?" accompanied by the maddest gestures, greeted my friend and congratulated our arrival.

Our welcome visitor, proved to be Mr. Wilkinson, a young commercial gentleman of Hull, who had been

acquainted with Mr. Marshal at Moscow. He had left that city some time before us, with a Russian servant and interpreter, and had been waiting in the expectation of receiving letters that were to be addressed to him here. And for the want of some occupation, or of a previous training to enjoy or endure solitude in a crowd, he had fallen into a state of *ennui* that he found almost insupportable. But while he was in this condition, as he described it to us, and reposing upon his bed, his servant had seen us alight from the diligence, and perceiving that we were Englishmen, had inquired of the conductor what were our names, which, as soon as he heard, he carried to his master, who at the name of Marshal, started from his bed, and hastened to pay his friend this congratulatory visit.

## CHAP. II.

### NIJHNI NOVGOROD.

Origin of the Fair.—The Races which inhabit Russia.—Basis of Russian Nationality.—Consecration of the Fair.—Procession.—Effects on the Multitude.—General Aspect of the Fair.—Government House.—Buildings of the Fair.—Arrangements and Classification of Merchandise.—Persian Ships.—Remarks on the moral Effects of the gathering.—Amusements of the Fair.

The celebrated fair which is now held at Nijhni Novgorod, dates its proper institution from the year 1648, at which epoch it was established at Makarief, about fifty miles lower down the Volga than the site upon which it is at present held. In the year 1816 however, upon the occasion of the destruction of its buildings by fire, it was removed to its present site, where it is less exposed to the annual inundations of the great river, which had continually threatened its destruction while it was held at Makarief. Since this time, the encouragement of the government, and its admirable position in the very centre of the vast inland navigation of the empire, have raised it to be, probably, the greatest place of exchange of merchandise actually exhibited, upon the face of the globe.

But before we mingle with the busy throngs at this great gathering of the commercial world, it will be as well to make a few concise remarks concerning the races which compose the Russian people.

The Russian empire is inhabited by a number of nations and tribes of different origin and language, and of various degrees of civilisation, from that of the refinement attained by a portion of the Sclavonic race, differing in nothing from that of the most advanced

people in Europe, down to the condition of the half wild man still roaming over the Siberian deserts, and subsisting by the use of the bow and arrow. Nevertheless, all the seemingly distinct races, which we find settled, or following still their pastoral or nomadic lives, between the Ural mountains and the western districts of the empire, appear to derive their origin from two sources—from the great Caucasian family, and from the Mongolian tribes. From causes however, the details of which belong to the history of barbarian conquests, to that of constrained and voluntary emigration, and to the effects of manners morals and customs, upon the increase and decrease of numbers among particular races, the proportion of the population of Mongol origin, which was once considerable, is not now supposed to exceed a hundredth part of that of the entire empire.

The portion of the population belonging to the Caucasian family, inhabiting Russia Proper, has been divided, and probably very justly, into three branches, the Sclavonic, the Thule or Finn, and the Tatar. And it is with tolerable exactness ascertained, that the first of these, the Sclavonic, compose about nine-tenths of the whole of the population of Caucasian origin in the empire. The people of this race are, however, subdivided into Russians properly so called, Lithuanians, Poles, Lettes, Wallachians, and Servians, the Russians of all these being so greatly predominant as to compose about two-thirds of the population of the empire, or, amounting to about forty millions of souls. Those, indeed, of this branch of the grand Caucasian family, may be considered to compose the more solid portion of the entire population.

In a word, the true Russian nationality is formed, like our own, from the amalgamation of a variety of races, of which one chiefly stamps the character and shadows

the destiny. Just in the same manner that all the races that successively settled in Britain, have mingled the elements of their character, only to modify that of the Saxon, it is evident, that all the blood of all the races that have settled in this empire, will finally be confounded with, and only modify that of the predominant branch of the Sclavonic race of the grand Caucasian family which has given its name to the country and its inhabitants.

We found, on the morning after our arrival at Nijhni Novgorod, that we were just in time to witness a religious ceremony, which is in usage, of consecrating the waters of the river before the proper opening of the fair. The ceremony cannot fail to interest the stranger, from the importance which is attached to it by the Russians. Indeed, until this service is performed, although there is a great deal of business previously transacted, the fair is not, in a religious, or truly Russian sense, deemed lawfully open; and, all prior transactions are considered by the Proper Russian merchants, as such only as Jews and pagans might be pardoned for being concerned in, and as hardly entitled to success.

We breakfasted early; and under the charge of our young friend, whose ecstasies at our arrival were now calmed down to more sober joy, we recrossed the bridge over which we had passed on the preceding day; and turning upon our left, we made our way across an open space strewed with iron in every form in which it is made an article of commerce, and with such other coarse goods as pottery, and ropes and hides, to about half a verst above the bridge, where the crowd was gathering to witness the ceremony above mentioned.

Upon arriving near the place where the consecration takes place, we found great preparations made for the occasion, and some thousands of people assembled. About fifteen or twenty yards from the bank of the

river had been erected a pavilion set on piles, and connected with the shore by a railed gangway, and probably large enough to hold about a hundred persons. The bishop of the diocese, who was to perform the ceremony, was not long before he made his appearance with a numerous retinue. The procession advanced from what seemed the centre of the fair, through a dense multitude, formed of the votaries of commerce from many nations, and of every grade, which divided and left an alley open, by which the priests with all the gorgeous symbols of their religion, approached the river. The bishop carried in his right hand a cross, and was preceded by about half a dozen other priests, one of whom bore a large crucifix, and followed by several more, and after these by a train composed of the civil and military officers, including his excellency the governor of the department, to which was added a host of the inferior orders of the officials from the churches; and there were also two ladies in the procession.

Arrived at the river's bank, the whole party in regular order, crossed the gangway to the isolated pavilion over the stream. We would have followed them; but even among such a wild-looking set of fellows in sheep-skins, of which the crowd for the greater part consisted, our most respectable appearance was not sufficient to gain us admittance. However, we contrived by clambering up a pile of bales of merchandise that was near the water, to obtain a tolerably good view of the little holy place, and of the ceremony of the consecration which now took place.

In the centre of the platform of the pavilion was left an opening resembling the well of a fishing-vessel, with a low railing around it; and between this and an outer railing, the parties that had composed the procession now stood, the priests generally on the inner side.

The bishop held a book of prayer open in his hand; and from time to time, water was drawn from the stream, and received certain especial benedictions, by prayers accompanied with the sprinkling of incense.

This was all we were able to observe of the act of consecration, by which the Volga and all its tributaries were sanctified, and every thing that floated, or was to float upon their thousand streams, on its way to the fair, or on its passage hence, whether the property of Jew, Turk, pagan, or Christian, was equally blessed and made lawful for the most pious Russian to purchase and deal in. But a scene followed, which was more open to the observation of a stranger, and was well calculated to impress us with the truth of opinions which we previously entertained concerning the lively and sincere piety of the people, however different may be the form in which it is shown, from that in which we are accustomed to regard acts of faith and religious exercises among ourselves. We had, before the ceremony commenced, observed a party of the police set to work, to drive some of the multitude out of the river, in which they had been standing immersed almost up to the middle; but we did not know the reasons, either for this, or for the love of these good people for the water, by standing in which they could see no better than from the shore, until the mystery was now explained. At the moment the procession wholly gained the shore upon its return from the pavilion, there was a rush from all sides into the river, every one being eager to dip himself as quickly as possible in the waters of the freshly consecrated stream. Nothing could more resemble the bathing of a party of pilgrims at the Jordan. The haste, however, of the pilgrims of the Oka, was much greater than that of those of the holier river. Some, in their eagerness to get holy water enough, and perhaps afraid that the virtue of what was now

sanctified might too quickly depart, yet fearful of getting beyond their depth, after dashing in, stopped as suddenly, and stood up to their knees in the stream, and bending forwards, threw water upon their heads with their hands, and splashed and paddled about, more like ducks in a pond, newly awakened from sleep, than like wholly terrestrial bipeds; while the more courageous, or more pious, proceeded and stood immersed up to their chins in the water. Others, less eager, or perhaps less regarding the quantity than the quality of the purifying element, formed themselves on each side of the walk of the procession, where several of the priests, who carried large vases of the water more immediately blessed, and such little brooms as are used in the churches for a like purpose, dashed the holy fluid about with a prodigality that nothing but its plentifulness might excuse. We ourselves, too, were at this time among the crowd; and we enjoyed as much of the sacerdotal bounty as might have been less agreeable upon a less holy occasion.

Similar ceremonies, for the sanctification of everything, were performed upon a comprehensive scale throughout the fair. But the merchant that occupied the dwelling which was nearest to the place at which the waters were consecrated, was entitled, upon the occasion, to a double privilege, on account of the position which he enjoyed. His apartments, into which the priests entered, received the greatest quantity of the sacred water which all, in larger or smaller proportions, shared, and, he was favoured, to the full capacity of his rooms, with the company of his friends, whom he entertained at a Champagne dinner. The whole day was, in fact, devoted to these consecrations. From the palace of the governor of the department, which stands in the midst of the fair, to the meanest shed, all were sprinkled with the consecrated water. Every article of

merchandise and of food was blessed, until nothing remained unholy. Thus the coffee and sugar which we afterwards took for our breakfast, and the meat, but the fish especially which swim in the consecrated stream, upon which we dined, and the tea that we took in the evening, as well as our bowl of punch, if we thought proper to finish with this, were all holy.

It should be remarked here, however, that this disposition towards making everything sacred, is a sentiment peculiarly interwoven with the Russian character, and, that the ceremony which we have just seen, is but such as takes place everywhere, with something or other for its object, upon a great scale, periodically, but also upon a smaller scale, continually. The rivers are blessed every where, as they begin to swell in the spring, that the sacred water may render the land more productive. The fruits of the land also receive the same blessing when in the blossom, that their growth may be accelerated, and again at maturity, that they may nourish those who partake of them. The great consecration of to-day was to render holy the fruits of industry and the produce of art, as well as to sanctify the bargains and dealing of those who came to transact business at the fair. And just as the cultivator of the soil looks for the blessing of Heaven, through the sanctification of the Church upon the fruits which are raised by the sweat of his brow, so the merchant hopes, by the same favour, to see his dealings thrive and his purse replenished.

We did not follow the religious party any further, during the performance of their pious offices, but proceeded to take a first general survey of the fair.

We walked directly from the water side, towards what appeared to us to be the centre of the great place of exchange. After passing by heaps of the coarser description of goods before mentioned, between the

river and the first line of the sheds, and crossing the ends of several passages and alleys, formed by temporary stalls, and shaded from the sun by awnings across from the roofs of the sheds, we entered a great square, which forms the most open, but not the busiest quarter of the fair.

The entire side of this open space, is formed by one of two fronts of a handsome stone building, the centre part of which is occupied by the military governor of the department or government of Novgorod, at this time the Prince Urasoff, and the wings of which contain the different public offices, with the residences of several of the especial officials for the time of the duration of the fair. The remaining three sides of the square are occupied chiefly by shops for the sale of goods by retail, and are ornamented by colonnades. In the centre of the grand public edifice, a broad double archway, supported in the middle by buttresses, conducts from the open square to the inner and more important lines and alleys of the fair. Within this archway, also, there are a number of stalls appropriated, for the greater part, to the sale of valuable and fine goods, chiefly by retail; such as Persian shawls and gowns, and Chinese silks from the East, and trinkets and jewellery from the West. The grand staircase, leading to the governor's apartments in the palace, is also here, as well as the entrance to several of the public offices, and that to the grand *restaurant* of the fair.

After passing the archway, we came into the very centre of this grand deposit of the exchangeable produce of half the nations of the world. Great order and regularity, in the plan of the buildings for the accommodation both of the merchants and of their stores may be here remarked. Immediately opposite the centre of the governor's palace, on this side, a double line of low stone buildings with colonnades, form a grand broad

way which is called the centre alley. This runs through the chief seat of all the great transactions of the fair, and terminates upon another square, which has its upper end formed by the national church, and one of its sides by a mosque, and the other by an Armenian church.

Upon each side of this main thoroughfare run six other lines of buildings, equally substantially constructed; and from the square proceed lines crossing at right angles all the lines that run parallel to the grand alley.

The grand alley, is appropriated chiefly to the sale of goods by retail; while in the lines which run parallel with it on both sides, are deposited the cloths, furs, cotton and other manufactured goods, which form the great staples of the produce of the Christian nations. But the lines that cross these, form the deposits of the Chinese, Persian, Buchara, and Tatar merchandise, which is indicated by their style of construction and decoration.

In these grand divisions of the fair, every line, or some portion of it, is appropriated to the deposit and sale of some particular description of goods, such as custom or convenience has classed under the same head. In the fair are found all the more important productions of the East and the West, and the North and the South. Here are exchanged the produce of the industry of Western Europe, improved by the advance of the arts, for the furs of Siberia, Kamtschatka, and even Russo-America, and for the works of pure human labour from Persia, Bochara, Tatary, Asia Minor and the mountains of Turkestan, and for the silks and teas of China. Here may be met the merchants and their assistants in the various national costumes of all these distant countries, except China,

the merchants of which country are represented by the Tatars.

This substantially built part of the fair, does not include above half the edifices of all sorts, which compose the great commercial depository. The rest, however, consist almost wholly of large temporary sheds, which are necessarily removed after the season of business, to avoid the inundations, from which even this site of the fair is not wholly secure, and by which they might otherwise find their way to the Caspian Sea. On some of the stone buildings we were shown the mark of the last inundation, at about seven feet from the ground.

The whole of this great area, except the side by the river, for the better protection of the goods against fire, which may not be brought in any form into the fair, is surrounded by a wide canal in the form of a horse-shoe, beyond which, especially on the side below the fair, in respect to the course of the river, there are houses for refreshment and entertainment.

Among the scenes exhibited at this great concourse of nations, not the least attractive to the stranger from Western Europe, is that which is presented by the shipping on the river. The breadth of the Oka, is here about the same as that of our famous Thames at London; and below the bridge above-mentioned, lie clustered all the ships and smaller vessels from the Caspian Sea, and all the craft from the trading and manufacturing towns which lie upon the Volga and its tributaries, throughout the governments north of Novgorod to the Valdai hills, which cross the country between St. Petersburg and Moscow, and to the mining districts at the very base of the Ural mountains. The ships of the Persians, of which there was a fair proportion, were the largest, and formed the most picturesque objects. They reminded us of the pictures in our ancient folio editions of the Greek and Latin

poets. We noticed one thing, however, that I do not know that any artist has found sufficient authority for introducing into any pictorial illustrations of the ancient poems. On each side of fearful beaks which form the prows of these vessels, was painted an immense eye, in which the passion of anger was in some cases so admirably expressed as to be well adapted to excite terror. Whether this is intended to aid the Persians in their wars, by inspiring their enemies with fear, or, as is more probable, to terrify some evil spirit of the waters of the Caspian, whose renown has not reached us, though I visited several of the ships during my stay at the fair, I could not learn.

We spent the remainder of this morning, in strolling about among this peaceful gathering of the commercial representatives of so many nations of the earth, assembled to exchange the superabundance with which nature has favoured some, for what industry and advance of the arts have produced in others. It seemed like a great council of all nations, tongues, and people, met together to combine the interests and cement the union of mankind, by making men of all lands depend, like the departments of a great state, upon the common efforts of the whole.

In the course of our walk, we called upon our late travelling companion, and some merchants to whom we were severally addressed. We found them all fully occupied with their affairs, and our visits were therefore upon this occasion very short. But on the same evening, we received already a visit from our German friend, who came politely to offer to show us a different phase of the great gathering of the nations, from that which we had seen in the morning.

As it was now more than two months past the summer solstice, when the time of leisure in the evening, in the 56th degree of latitude, is beginning to lengthen, it was

not wonderful, that the amusements of the world, with the world's commerce, should have found their way to Nijhni Novgorod, and have established themselves among such an assemblage of people of so many nations and of such a variety of customs, manners, and tongues. Accordingly, there were singers, dancers, and musicians in abundance, and indeed, all sorts of contributors to pleasure, that require no particular idiom to give expression to their note of enjoyment. One house, under the direction of a Frenchman, was said to have no less than 500 fair inmates, chiefly from Western Europe, all trained to the several arts which relieve the tired senses between the hours of business and of sleeping, and tend to make sleep itself the more refreshing, and without the aid of which, one half of mankind might die of *ennui.*

I shall mention only one of the houses, to partake in the amusements of which our friend took us this evening, convinced that a further description of what is to be witnessed in this way upon the banks of the Oka, is not among the indispensable obligations of the most faithful narrator of the incidents and impressions of travel in any land.

After crossing the canal or ditch above mentioned, we came into what may be called one of the suburbs of the great commercial citadel, where we found promenades and *cafés,* which might almost remind a stranger of the houses and walks of the same description in the Parisian Champs Elysées; and we entered one of the *cafés,* into which we were attracted by the music. Upon ascending to the first floor, we found an extensive room, elegantly furnished with everything inviting to the stranger. Unlike houses of the same kind almost everywhere else, instead of the number of little tables usually distributed about the room, there was here one long table with benches upon both sides. Upon each side of the

room, there were also two rows of benches, placed one above the other. Upon the upper of these, were seated with their feet upon the lower, several little parties of fair musicians apart from one another, with harps and other stringed instruments in their hands, and dressed in the costumes of the several countries from which they came. Thus, under the same roof were gathered the beauty and talent of Greece, Italy, Germany, Holland, Southern Russia, Switzerland, and other countries, all of course Christian; for the privilege which men enjoy, of converting the daughters of their several countries into portable machines for the amusement of the world, only belongs to Christian lands. The visitors, however, who were, of course, all of our own sex, were not confined to those who dwell within the limits of Christendom; but were from all the lands save China, which had sent forth of their abundance to Nijhni Novgorod.

Some of the good company with whom we took our seats, sat sipping coffee, and some tea, and others a stronger beverage. Some puffed the Russian chiboock (which is like that of the Eastern nations) with their beverage, and others the meerschaum of the Germans, or the cigar; while others were dozing over the mixed melody of stringed instruments, not scraped chord against chord, but touched by light fingers and accompanied by the choicest voices. It was a scene amid melodious sounds, which to those whose eyes were open, and whose ears were not closed, afforded the prettiest prospect, amidst the most entrancing sounds, that might be met with any where within the confines of four walls.

## CHAP. III.

### NIJHNI NOVGOROD.

The Governor Prince Urasoff.—Town and Kremlin of Nijhni Novgorod.—Rambles in the Fair.—Tatar Princes.—Tea.—Banks of the Volga.—Tatar Scenes.—Causes of the superior Tea we get in Russia.—Making Purchases.—Jealousy of the Merchants.—Visit to Government House.—Application for Permission to visit Siberia.—The Prince's Idea of England.

THE next step which we took out of the ordinary course of our observations at the fair, was to wait upon the governor, Prince Urasoff. We had previously called at the government house, but finding his excellency engaged, we had merely left our cards. We had now, however, the favour of an interview with the representative of his sovereign for the grand government of Nijhni Novgorod. His excellency, who was in uniform, received us with great politeness; and when he found that we were not at the fair for objects of business, he expressed surprise at our wandering so far, for the mere gratification, as he supposed, of our curiosity, while we had so much of the beautiful in nature, among our own hills and dales, where we might, he thought, at least pass our time more agreeably than in travelling in Russia.

After we had, in answer to this remark, expressed to the prince our gratification at finding that he knew something of our country, we thought it due to the thousands of our compatriots abroad, to whom this remark might apply, to say that we believed that everything in all countries conveyed some fresh impression to those who saw it for the first time; and, that we thought, therefore, that we always returned to our island

home, after a journey in any country abroad, with at least some addition to our previous stock of knowledge.

Our interview with the governor upon this occasion was short. But on the same day we took a droschky and drove to the Kremlin, or citadel common to all considerable towns in Russia.

As we ascended the hill which leads to the gate of the kremlin, we saw an instance of *goître* in a peasant woman, who, as I afterwards ascertained, was a resident of the place, and lived in the upper town. The case was such, however, as would scarcely have attracted notice in Switzerland; and it was the only one I saw during my travels in Russia.

We found the citadel built upon an elevation similar to that upon which the Kremlin at Moscow stands. It is an ancient fortress, little remarkable for strength, yet surrounded by high walls with seven towers irregularly formed, but now in a state of decay. The towers which overhang the cliffs of the Volga and its tributary, command a fine view of the fair and of the great river of Russia, with a vast plain stretching out to the horizon in the direction of the north and east. The day was bright, and several vessels with every one a single mast and one enormous square sail, which is the ordinary rig of the craft that navigate the waters of the Volga, were slowly stemming the current of the noble river.

There are several churches, the palace of the governor, and some public offices within the citadel; but there is little to engage a stranger's attention, except a monument in bronze of Menim and Posellarsky, similar to that which is to be seen in the *Ketai Gorod* at Moscow.

We left the fortress by the gate which leads to the elevated portion of the town; and after driving through the principal streets in this direction, and alighting to

visit a little public garden scarcely worth attention, we returned to the lower town by another route, which brought us down a declivity in front of the fair.

After again crossing the bridge, we spent the rest of the day in driving through the lines of the fair that were most frequented; and at sunset we mingled with an audience assembled to listen to the music of a military band playing in front of the palace. But whether the more dulcet notes and their accompaniments of feminine voices and the pretty prospect, within the *cafés*, were more attractive to the traders at the fair generally, or whether it was because the hours of business were scarcely run, we did not find the company here very numerous or very select.

The next day, our fellow-traveller from Moscow accompanied us in our rambles about the fair, and introduced us to some of the more remarkable of the merchants from Eastern Russia. The first among these whom we visited, were two Tatar princes from Kazan, who held several of the stalls along the cross-lines at some distance from the centre of the fair, and the chief article of whose merchandise was an excellent description of soap, which is made at Kazan, and is known and esteemed throughout Russia. It is of a dark brown colour; and that which is refined and scented, is most agreeable to make use of, as well as effective, and certainly deserves as much as Russian canvass, to be received in all parts of Western Europe.

We found the good Moslems seated over their coffee, with their chiboock, as placid as Arabs; but upon recognising their friend our companion, they rose and invited us across the barrier which separated the buyers from the sellers, but not as Arabs might have done in a Mussulman land, to begin with the pipe and coffee and finish with business when the pipe required filling, but rather like the Russians, in showing us at once their

goods to the best advantage, instead of leaving us to discover all their good qualities ourselves. When we conversed with them, however, upon subjects apart from their affairs, we found them models of dignity, good humour, and good manners.

From this quarter we returned to the centre of the fair, where we now paid a visit to several Tatars of the Chinese line.

We found two of the largest traders among these, engaged in their common warehouse on the ground floor, unpacking bales of silks and other Chinese goods; but they took us to an upper story of the building which they occupied, to show us their yet more precious stores of fancy articles, such as silk dresses and handkerchiefs; and they seemed delighted at our expressing some wonder at the riches they appeared to possess: and we did not leave them without an invitation to smoke and take coffee, but from which we excused ourselves for the present.

On the same evening, we drove to the banks of the Volga above the fair, where the tea is landed. We found a very busy scene here, and not the least interesting, of those we witnessed at Nijhni Novgorod. It was thoroughly Tatar. Or a few officials formed the only exception among the groups of which it was composed. These were in uniform, and were occupied in inspecting the tea as it was received, by probing the chests. For this purpose, they are armed, every one with a long tubular instrument, which they thrust through from one side or end of the chest to the other; and, upon withdrawing it, they at once ascertain the quality of the tea, and whether the chest contains any other articles of merchandise, either contraband or subject to higher duties than the tea. We observed that the chests were nicely lined within with tinfoil, and covered completely, and very carefully, without, with bullocks' hides.

The Russians attribute the incontestable superiority of the tea they every where drink, above any we are able to get in England, or in any other part of Europe, chiefly to its coming over land to them, while that obtained in other countries comes by sea, but also to the superior covering of the chests. From later information, however, obtained nearer the country in which the tea is produced, and to which a further reference will be hereafter made, I am induced to think, that the difference in the quality of the tea is wholly to be attributed to the difference of soil and climate in the several districts of the country in which the plant is produced.

Before we left this busy suburb of the fair, we were introduced by one of the merchants, into some temporary wooden houses, where several Tatar women, or at least women dressed in the costume of the Tatars, exposed a variety of fancy goods of Chinese manufacture for sale, such as coloured blinds, fans, and precious stones.

The fifth day after our arrival, we were engaged all day in the most irksome business of bargaining for trifling articles of merchandise, with Russians and Tatars, previous to the departure of my fellow-countrymen, who were to leave Nijhni Novgorod that evening for Moscow, on their return towards home.

Our bargains however accomplished, my friends departed tolerably loaded with choice articles of Eastern manufacture, and I was now left to make the most I could of the society of those whose acquaintance I had formed on the journey and since we arrived at the fair.

After the departure of my friends, for several days I passed the mornings in wandering about alone. But I always dined in the evening at the grand *restaurant* above-mentioned, where I usually met one or more of the merchants whose acquaintance I had formed; and I must mention here a trifling piece of mystery, with which

I was involuntarily connected, and which afforded us some amusement for one or two evenings.

Among my friends there was one who rarely failed to come at our accustomed hour, and who always brought such intelligence as might have been flattering, alarming, or amusing, to any stranger whom it concerned, according to the objects that brought him to the fair, or as the case might otherwise happen to be. This seemingly rather inquisitive gentleman, over our first course, gave us every evening a most exact account how myself had passed the time since we parted upon the previous day. He named the hour at which I had risen, the time at which I left my hotel, where I had walked, what conversation I had engaged in, with all to whom I had spoken, what I had purchased (if anything), the price paid, and even where the article purchased was deposited. The messenger of these curious tidings, would not, for some time, give any clue to the mystery which they seemed to involve. However, I concluded that he himself must be a member of the police in disguise, and that he had very legitimately entered upon the inquisitive research at an earlier period of my sojourn at the fair, but that being now quite satisfied of my perfect harmlessness, continued it merely to amuse our party. It turned out, however, to be the good work of some jealous dealers, who had taken it into their heads that I was a merchant in disguise, and had come to make covertly some large purchases, which might, as soon as the articles which I came to secure, were known, affect the market, and touch the interests of those who came to make the same purchases.

After a few days, I had the opportunity of seeing the fair and the society gathered within its circuit, in a somewhat different phase from that in which I had previously seen them. At the time I left England, it was

not my intention to attempt to penetrate further into Russia than the ancient capital. Upon the road, however, between St. Petersburg and Moscow, in a waking dream by night, I travelled in fancy far beyond the Ural mountains, and even beyond the eastern limits of the Russian empire in Asia. But the return of the day, and the conversation of a travelling companion of that journey, soon effaced for the time the agreeable vision which I had enjoyed. While dining in company, however, with the merchants above mentioned, a young man joined us, who had just arrived from the interior of the vast country which lies between the Ural mountains and the Pacific Ocean, and some information that I received from him through the interpretation of my friends, awakened my slumbering desire of penetrating at least into the heart of Siberia; and, after ripening my plans as far as it lay in my power, there appeared to be no difficulty in the way, provided I could obtain a passport. I determined, therefore, to wait upon the governor, whose politeness I had already experienced, to ask at once for permission to undertake these travels; and I took an early opportunity of so doing.

I shall be particular in my account of my visit to the government house upon this occasion, for the purpose, partly of reporting what I saw of the manner in which business is transacted, between the Russians high in authority and the people of all classes who necessarily approach them, and partly that it belongs to, and was the first incident connected with, the travels that were afterwards undertaken and accomplished.

As I had occasion before to know that the governor spoke both French and English, I came to his office in the palace alone. Before reaching the particular apartment in which his excellency sat, there were two spacious rooms to pass through, at the doors of which

were posted sentinels, in addition to the guard of honour without. No obstruction, however, was offered to the passage of any of those who presented themselves at either of them. Upon entering the first room, I found about a dozen *mujiks*, or men of the peasant class, waiting to obtain an interview with the governor, and, in the second, about four times that number of persons of the various nations at the fair, and of the various classes above that of the peasant. After walking about the room for a minute or two, I observed, at a signal from an official who came out of the governor's apartment within, all the persons present form themselves into a large semi-circle, plainly for the purpose of receiving his excellency, now about to appear; and, as I knew it to be the custom on these occasions, for parties to place themselves in the order in which they arrived, I took, of course, the last place at the end of the line which was the farthest removed from the door of the inner apartment.

As soon as the governor made his appearance, he addressed the first man upon his right, and then the next and the next, one after the other, granting, it might be, the request of one, and refusing that of another, but all with such truly national despatch, that every one was cleared off, and my turn arrived in about half the length of time that it would have taken one of our colonial governors to have got at the pith of a single sitting visitor's prosaic tale. Indeed, I cannot help thinking that, if the secretaries of state of Queen Victoria, were to adopt this method of transacting business, and were at stated periods to give similar interviews to all persons whose business might not be known to them, or known to be frivolous, as well as to those who have no business at all, that great advantage would arise to the public interests, from the time that

would be gained for the transaction of more important affairs.

When my turn came, the governor, as soon as he saw me, expressed surprise at finding me still at the fair. He knew that two English passports had received his signature, and he was under the impression that I had quitted his government, with the friend with whom I had arrived. But without waiting for any reply to the observation he had made, he begged me to enter his inner apartment, where he said he would speak with me as soon as he had despatched the peasants that were waiting to see him in the third room; and I obeyed the behest.

In a few minutes the governor returned to his own chamber; and after some ordinary remarks had been made, I entered at once upon the matter for which I had taken my place among the rest of his visitors. The unexpected demand soon changed the language of ceremony into that of business, and led to a number of questions on the part of the governor, concerning the objects of my proposed journey, the answers to which amounted merely to an assurance that they were chiefly, mere curiosity to see how men lived at so great a distance from the seats of civilisation upon the ancient continent, that I might compare their manner of life with that of the natives of the woods in the New World, with whom it had been my lot for many years to dwell; but that this motive was nevertheless mingled with some interest about the mines of the precious metals, and the geological as well as geographical features generally of the vast country under the Russian dominion.

The prince now expressed yet greater surprise than he had done on a former occasion, that an Englishman should choose to wander so far from the country which he politely termed the very seat of comfort and intelligence, without higher or better-defined objects than

I seemed to him to have. I replied, however, to this, induced by my doubts of his assent to my wishes of passing the Ural mountains, that although born and bred in the island, of the condition of the inhabitants of which he had spoken so flatteringly, my case might be considered peculiar; for that it had been my good or evil fortune since quite a youth, to be a wanderer, save at intervals, far from all the advantages that my country might possess, first, in the prosecution of one of the most interesting pursuits in which men engage, and afterwards from the want of what habit had rendered almost necessary to existence.

In answer to this, the prince asked at what epoch I proposed going into Siberia. To which I replied, that I should like to commence my journey as soon as possible after I might obtain my passport. "I must," he then said after a few moments' pause, "consider further of this. It has taken me by surprise. Had your objects been of a commercial character, there would most likely have arisen no difficulty about the matter. Where," he then added, "do you usually dine?" "At the *restaurant*," I replied. "I beg then," said he, "that you will dine with me to-day," mentioning at the same time the hour, "when I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to the princess and some friends lately arrived; and upon the affair of the passport we will take another opportunity to speak further."

Upon this, I returned thanks for the invitation, accepted it, bowed and retired.

## CHAP. IV.

### NIJHNI NOVGOROD.

Dinner at the Government House.—The Prince in honourable Banishment.—Trait of Manners at Court at St. Petersburg.—Admiral Ricord.—Ceremonies of the Russian Table.—Saloon.—Coffee-Conversation.

When I came to the government house, at the appointed hour, I approached the door of the saloon, in some doubt about the manner in which I ought to bear myself after my application. It does not occur to all of us, during the course of our lives, to be applicants for a favour, and at the same time, guests at the table of the party to whom our petition has been addressed. Such, however, was to be the traveller's position at the government house at Nijhni Novgorod on this occasion. All my doubts, however, not only concerning the management of myself, but also concerning the prosecution of my journey, were set aside as soon as the door of the saloon opened, by my reception, and the manner of my introduction to the princess and such of the guests as were already assembled.

But before making any further remarks concerning the host and hostess of the government house, and such of their friends as I met there, I must mention an occurrence which I subsequently heard was the cause which brought the prince and the princess to this government. I shall refer to the circumstance merely as a current report at the fair, the very credit given to which, whether the report were well or ill founded, being sufficiently characteristic of the spirit of the age in Russia, to render it worth our notice.

I was informed, that the prince and princess Urasoff, whose united ages could not at this time have exceeded fifty, were, about two years since, among the greatest ornaments at the emperor's court, where many of those little whimsical occurrences, which in our country relieved the sameness of court etiquette during the reigns of our earlier sovereigns, still take place, and that, on one occasion, the prince played a part that so offended the emperor, that he was sent with the princess and their family, from the brilliant court of St. Petersburg, into a kind of honourable banishment, with the appointment, for I believe, five years, to the government of this department.

The Russians, whether designedly or not, have a way of relieving the formal moments that precede the announcement of dinner, during the assembling of the guests, by the introduction of a kind of semi-meal called *zakooska*, which some translate luncheon, but certainly improperly, on account of the different relative times at which these two meals are taken. The luncheon, whether a meal or not, we take about mid-time between our two chief daily meals; whereas, the *zakooska* comes immediately before we sit down to dinner. A tray is usually found on the table when the guests arrive, upon which there are always placed several stimulating dishes, such as smoked meats, anchovies, sardines, and caviare, and some corresponding wines and spirits; and, in partaking of these, the guests at once escape the heaviest moments in our social hours, and sharpen their appetites for the coming feast.

While the guests that had already assembled on this occasion were whetting their appetites over the *zakooska*, fresh parties were successively arriving. Several officers in full uniform entered, one by one, and several of the *chinovnik*, or civil officials, who were also in uniform. At length a little more ceremony which I observed at

the opening of the door, and the prince's advance to meet the party entering, proclaimed some guests of more distinction than those already arrived. As soon as the first bows and greetings of this party and their host were over, as the new guests advanced towards the part of the room where the only two ladies that were present were seated, I observed that one among them was in naval uniform, and wore an admiral's coat with several decorations, and that the rest were young military officers.

As soon as the compliments of the newly arrived guests were paid to the ladies, the prince introduced me to the naval officer as Admiral Ricord, and then turned to welcome some more guests that were still arriving. The admiral spoke such pure English, that I should have taken him for my countryman, had I not known that there was no Englishman of his rank in the Russian service. But words of course had scarcely passed, before he informed me that he was an Italian by birth, but that he had served as a youngster in the British navy, and had been a midshipman under Nelson.

As soon as the guests were all assembled, a pair of folding doors were suddenly thrown open, and the table of an inner room appeared, encumbered with all the showy ornaments that grace the feasts of princes and the representatives of sovereign power.

The way was now shown by the host and hostess. The guests did not observe much order in entering, and they took their places indiscriminately, as the host and hostess seated themselves on each side of the table in the middle.

The Russian table, in relation to the viands with which it is covered, is, even to those who have been in most of the countries of Europe, still new. The Russian dishes that seem to be the least related to the Continental dishes generally, are fish soup, and *batvenia*

or beer-soup. Almost all the rest, resemble more or less those of the Germans. There are several kinds of fish of which soup may be made; but it is not until we reach the banks of the Volga, that we can get that which is here most esteemed, indeed, in every way in which it is cooked, and which is probably the best of any in the world for that purpose. This is the sterlet. It is a white fish, at once delicate, rich, and high flavoured; but it will not keep to be transported to any distance. It resembles in form the shark and dog-fish of the ocean, and is no doubt a variety of the sturgeon; but it is rarely larger than what we should consider rather a small-sized cod. I believe it is not found anywhere west of the grand river of Russia and its tributary streams; but it abounds, and is considered to be better, in all the rivers east of the Volga, on both sides the Ural mountains; and means certainly ought to be found to introduce it into every considerable river of Western Europe. When fried, this fish requires no butter to be used in the cooking, and sauce is rarely used with it when eaten after any way in which it may be cooked. The *batvenia*, the other rarity to the Southern European, is composed of salmon, *quass*, which is the beer of the country, sorrel, and cucumber.

We had many good dishes on this occasion, and abundance of excellent French wines, including Champagne. But the time occupied in eating, drinking, and conversation, which were all enjoyed, and all ended, together, was very short. The Russians have not yet acquired the peculiarly British practice of deferring all subjects worth talking about on these occasions, until the proper viands are removed, and over the juice of the grape falling to more serious discourse, and therefore make the best use of this time while eating; so that as this was the first Russian table at which I dined, where I was not myself the sole guest, I was taken by

surprise when the whole party, in the very midst of a lively discourse, at the signal of the host himself, at once rose; thus ending the pleasures of the table just at the point that we, at least when we have no ladies to part with, are apt to think they begin.

Few of the Continentals, although they read of cabinet dinners, aldermen's feasts, and of the dining and feasting of the leading members of a thousand institutions of one kind or another in England, have any idea of the nature of the influence of these entertainments upon the affairs in which those who attend them are associated, or indeed of their effects generally upon our entire social condition. It is easy for them to believe that much business may be talked of, and some transacted, on these occasions. But the true character of the influence of our convivial tables, is assuredly to be sought in the charities which are not alone introduced into the particular affairs of the associated *convives*, but also thereby spread generally through the serious business of all men's lives.

Certainly, the state that debated their political affairs once when sober and once when inebriated, were in the wrong in supposing, at least if the effects of their intoxicating beverages were like those of Port wine and Sherry upon ourselves, that their debates were more energetic when under the influence of them. Let a Whig and a Tory, for instance, in the extreme of these party opinions, if such be still extant, or a Puritan and a Puseyite, be set one against the other in unrestrained discourse, before dinner and an hour after the dishes have disappeared, and who will not acknowledge that, whatever the effects of the wine upon our other faculties, its effects generally upon the passions is sedative, and that it becomes thereby productive of charity enough to value all the egotism in the world?

As we all arose from the table, a little ceremony of

peculiarly Russian character took place, which is never omitted after a meal, whether in private or public, or in the houses of the high or of the low of the land; and I choose this place merely as the first occasion that offers for mentioning it. It is the custom to have, usually in one corner of the room in every house, whether of the prince or of the peasant, some picture, either of the patron saint of the family, in which none is wanting, or of one of the holy personages of religious history; and upon rising from the table, which is always a simultaneous movement, the whole party turn at the same time towards this picture, and cross themselves and bow. After this, the host turns to his guests, and the guests turn to the host, and with their bows to each other, are completed the religious and social rites of the Russian dinner-table.

On occasions similar to the present, the bowing is stiff and ceremonious; but when the entertainment is more of a private character, the guests near the middle, or top, or bottom of the table, as it may happen, shake hands with the host or hostess, or with both; and, when there are children under fourteen or fifteen years of age and their mother is at table, the children generally, whether boys or girls, kiss their mother before any movement is made towards the saloon. After our more formal ceremonies, however, at the government house we re-entered the saloon, where coffee awaited us.

We found the windows now thrown open to admit the full sounds of the notes of the band, which was playing some lively airs in front of the palace. There was scarcely time to take a single cup of coffee and a rapid glance over the fine sight which the fair exhibits from these windows, before there was a movement of the governor's guests towards the door. It is the fashion in Russia, for every one to retire immediately

after taking coffee, the indolent to indulge in a *siesta*, and the diligent to take a little exercise, before returning to their ordinary occupations. The retirement, however, on this occasion, of those who were the greatest strangers, was arrested by the governor; and I presently found myself seated in company with the admiral and the prince, in front of the princess, who reclined upon a sofa with the only guest of her own sex by her side; and a lively conversation now took place, in as pure English as I ever remember hearing spoken by any foreigners, not entirely educated in England.

The ladies asked a great many questions concerning English customs, in relation to our manners in our social intercourse; and seemed highly interested and amused with the little contrasts, which the different customs of our two dissimilar countries seemed to exhibit.

To myself, this intercourse, after several days forced discourse with the merchants, upon the material and statistics of the fair, and other matters with which very properly their heads were brimful, was proportionally the more delightful. But it is not necessary to attempt any reproduction of our discourse, not only because what fell from this highly accomplished couple in particular, might be very difficult, if it were consistent with propriety, to report, but also because the conversation was chiefly of our country and of its literature, which had excited the prince and princess's highest veneration.

The admiral, too, related several anecdotes of our great naval hero, under whom he had served, which very probably are well known, although I had not myself before heard them, and might be twice-told tales, were they here repeated.

While the stranger guests were thus agreeably entertained, two fine children of our noble hosts' were led in by an English nurse, from whom I learned, that

Russian parents are not less apt to spoil their children than the fondest among ourselves.

I quitted the elegant and hospitable chambers of the government house upon this occasion, about two hours after we had risen from dinner; but not before I had received an invitation to occupy a place at the same table, every day during my stay at the fair.

Upon a subsequent occasion, I had the pleasure of meeting at the governor's table our countryman, Mr. Cobden, who had arrived the previous day. The governor introduced the two Englishmen to each other, before the dinner was announced. There was no time, however, for comparing notes of travels, as we were a minute or two afterwards seated at table, and Mr. Cobden left the fair on his return to Moscow, immediately after the dinner was over.

## CHAP. V.

### NIJHNI NOVGOROD.

Classification of the Russian Merchants.—The Baron Meyendoff.—A rich Serf.—Religious Character of the Merchants.—Horses.—Statistics.—Tatars and Persians.—Conversations with Tatars.—Consequences of shaving.—Arrangements for the Journey to Siberia.—Russian dread of Siberia.—Russian mode of calculating Accounts.—Travelling Carriage.—Parting with Friends.—Departure.

WHAT remains to be said concerning the fair in the true spirit in which it should be regarded, may be perhaps appropriately preceded by a few remarks concerning the peculiar classification of the commercial orders generally throughout the country, and upon the relations which they bear to the rest of the Russian people.

It has often been supposed in Southern Europe, that Russia has degraded her trading population, and arbitrarily subjected this indispensable class in every civilised state, to the disrespect of their equals, or even of their inferiors, both in worldly condition and in their natural position among the other orders of the people. But this impression is certainly erroneous. The student of political economy might, on the contrary, search the history of the commercial classes under every form of government, from the time the Phœnicians came to purchase the useful metals in our remote island, and through the age when the proud argosies of the royal merchant of the Queen of commercial states —

> "Like seigniors and rich burghers of the flood,
> Did over-peer the petty traffickers."

down to the late sovereigns of Egypt and Holland, and not find a system better adapted to the political age of the country in which it exists, than that which obtains in Russia.

Here, the political and social position of the trading portion of the population, and the ranks of the classes into which they must necessarily be divided, are regulated by a just standard, and defined by law. Thus, all those who are engaged in any way in commercial transactions, are formed into three grades, which have severally their place in society in proportion to their wealth, which must be regarded for the most part as the representative of merit, as well as the legitimate standard by which the position they ought to occupy should be ascertained. But besides the conveniences arising from the order which this arrangement introduces into the social relations among the people, it has the advantage of encouraging enterprise and industry among the whole class, the superior grade being open to every one who is able to accumulate sufficient wealth to attain that rank.

The three grades into which the trading population are thus divided, are termed the first, the second, and the third guild; and the amount of the wealth which determines the grade to which they severally belong, is ascertained by a tax of 1¾ per cent per annum, which is levied upon the capital, whether nominal or real, which they declare themselves to have engaged in their affairs. The amount necessary to entitle the merchant to the rank and privilege of the first guild, is 50,000 rubles; that which is necessary to the second, is only 5000 rubles; and that which is required for the third, is but 4000 rubles.

The merchants of the first guild, have exclusively the privilege of carrying on foreign commerce; and besides their rank among the members of the commercial fraternity, they have several of the privileges of the

nobility; while the merchants of the second and third guilds have no higher privileges than ordinary burghers.

As to the foreign merchants in Russia, they enjoy the same privileges as the merchants of the first guild, in everything essential that concerns foreign commerce; but they are not permitted to engage in the internal trade of the country.

It certainly seems to me that nothing could be more judicious, or more worthy of imitation, than this Russian mode of classifying the commercial order of the people. For acquired wealth, under the system upon which European society is based, must in general represent merit of one kind or other; and industry and perseverance, which are clearly the means by which men of this order become rich, are at the same time the qualities in men by which the state is most benefited and civilisation the most advanced, and without which no ability, no genius, no enterprise, can in an equal degree contribute to the interests and solid advantages of society.

Nevertheless, since the possession of these means to riches, is not incompatible with great depravity of character, it would appear at first to be wrong to deem wealth acquired by the possession of them, as a proper guide to distinguish merit of any kind, or determine the rank to which men should be entitled in civilised society. To this objection, however, an answer must easily suggest itself. By the qualities through which riches are acquired the state is benefited, and the state repays those who possess and use them for her advantage, by conferring rank and distinction. But where the moral conduct seems to form a contrast to those qualities by which the state has determined the formal rank of the citizen, public opinion operates to counteract the disadvantages which might arise from the too great respect paid to those who possess attributes

which, however they may benefit the state, politically considered, when unaccompanied by corresponding virtues, have not a favourable effect upon the general interests of society.

I have not yet mentioned among my acquaintances at Nijhni Novgorod, the Baron Meyendorff, the superintendent of the fair. One of the letters of introduction which I brought to Moscow from St. Petersburg, was from the accomplished Russian traveller and author Prince Alexis Soltykoff, whose works will be found mentioned in another section of these travels, and was addressed to the baron, who resides at Moscow, where I received many civilities from him, which were now renewed, much to my advantage, in seeing the various phases of the fair.

The superintendent did not arrive until the traffic was at the highest. Soon after his arrival, he obligingly accompanied me to inspect some of the principal warehouses and better sort of stalls for the sales by retail. Among the latter, in the grand alley of the fair, there was one kept by a cutler, who was very justly considered a curiosity of the place, on account of the mechanical skill with which he was gifted by Nature. Born a serf, and still in a state of bondage, he had accumulated great riches, which he was permitted to possess and enjoy. From his first essay, during his leisure hours, unaided by any rules of art, and without any of the instruments usually employed by the workers in the same craft, he had been able to produce such beautiful and useful articles in every branch of cutlery, that the demand for his goods had become so great as to create a trade that kept the population of a whole village employed for the benefit of the proprietor of the estate to which he belonged.

There was a little trait of Russian eccentricity and propensity to extremes, connected with this ingenious

mechanic's history. By the Russian law, every serf is permitted to purchase his own freedom. But the law has not settled the conditions. They are left as a matter of arrangement between the seignior and the serf. In the present instance, vanity and eccentricity in the mind of the seignior had struggled with honour and charity, and these opposite qualities had neutralised one another; and a mere whim kept the serf in a state of bondage, without in effect any exaction of service or restraint upon his exercise of all the advantages of a state of freedom.

It may be mentioned here, that vast numbers of the serfs that belong in particular to those who do not possess landed estates, or do not employ all their serfs upon those they do possess, are either let out, or are at liberty to go where they will and engage themselves in what they will, upon the condition of paying an annual sum to be agreed upon with their master, and which is called "*obrok;*" and this was the position which this ingenious serf bore at this time to his liege lord. He was permitted to work for his exclusive benefit, go where he pleased, and possess all the money he could accumulate, upon condition only of paying about fifty shillings a year, as the mere value of a substitute of the commonest class to fill his place. Yet, such was the pride of the boyar that could act so far so honourably, that he would not take a very large sum offered him by his wealthy serf for his proper freedom. This serf was said to be making annual sales, the produce of the village mentioned included, of no less than 125,000*l.* sterling.

While we were overhauling an immense stock of furs in one of the warehouses of the great Russian Company, we were surprised by a sudden rush of twenty or thirty merchants in their beards and caftans into the company's wide show-room, without any mixture of foreigners of any description, and with them

several priests, with all the accompaniments to the performance of the holy offices of the Church. I thought at first, that some case of sudden illness had brought the confessors to the bed of the sick; but it proved to be an extra service of the Church in private; and I now learned from the baron, that the merchants, not being able to go to Church in consequence of the pressure of business, were accustomed to subscribe to have private masses celebrated within one of the houses in each of the respective lines by turns; and we happened to-day to enter that at which this service was to be performed.

Another day we drove to the distance of about half a verst from the centre of the traffic, to see the horses that composed a part of the merchandise of the fair. There were some of a very fine cross-breed between the Arabian and the Tatar, valued at from 40*l.* to 60*l.* English; but some small horses were selling for about 12*l.* the pair.

We paid a visit also to some gipsies in the same neighbourhood, and found them just like all the rest of this extraordinary race.

The baron only remained a day or two; but before he left, he gave me some particulars concerning the amount of the commercial transactions at the fair, and concerning some of the more important points from which the merchandise proceeded. I shall merely, however, here state, though upon this good authority, that there were usually at the fair at one time during the busiest of the days that it is held, about 300,000 strangers, and that at this time there were 260,000, engaged in the exchange of merchandise amounting to the value of 55,500,000 silver rubles, this ruble being worth about three shillings and four-pence English. The European foreign merchandise amounted to the value of 3,500,000; and Russian, 41,500,000; and the Asiatic to 10,500,000.

And it may also be mentioned as a remarkable fact, that there was not less than the value of 2,000,000 of rubles of medicinal drugs included in this authorised calculation.

My curiosity concerning the fair turned more towards the lines kept by the merchants from the East and from the coast of the Caspian Sea, than towards the western lines, occupied chiefly or exclusively by the European merchants; and, accompanied by one of my friends, I very frequently spent an evening with the Tatars, and once or twice smoked away an hour or two in company with the Persians. The chiboock, tea, and conversations concerning the wonderful extremes in the different races of men when at their native hearths, and the ease with which they were made by their mutual interest to assimilate here, and to work together for the benefit of all, were the pastimes in which we engaged. Our discourse, however, was never very lively, and when we were with the Persians, not always intelligible. All that was said by these most remarkable of the strangers at the fair, after being translated into the Russian language, remained unintelligible, to myself at least, until rendered again into one of the languages with which I was acquainted; and the same inconveniences of course attended the communications which were made from myself to them, in return for the information I received. They evinced, too, great disinclination to be asked any question apart from their affairs, or from commercial matters generally. They listened with tolerable attention to the description of a machine which performed the work of 1000 men in the production of cloth and cotton goods; but when an endeavour was made to give them an idea of the "Times" printing operations, they dozed over the wonder, just as men yawn over an unintelligible tale. When any questions were put to them, concerning the religion, and the social institutions, of their country, they

affected, as it appeared to us, either ignorance of, or indifference concerning, all matters of the kind, and always brought the subject back again to the affairs of trade.

Our conversations with the Tatars were more lively, partly owing, as it appeared to us, to their greater intelligence, and partly to their being acquainted with the Russian tongue. Those in particular who were subjects of the emperor, seemed pleased with questions put to them concerning their religious institutions; and one of them became quite my warm friend, when I spoke a few words of Arabic, not yet forgotten with the rest that my spare vocabulary contained when among his Mussulman brethren in the South, and which he perfectly understood. Our discourse with this Tatar interested me the more, as a departure, at least, from the usual reserve of his Arab and Turkish fellow Moslems. He asked many questions concerning our English institutions generally, and certainly seemed to me to comprehend such explanations as were attempted to be given to him, quite as well, which is, however, to say but little, as Frenchmen or Italians ever seem to do anything told them concerning the character of the government under which we live. Among other things, he asked whether we had any mosque in England, for any resident Mussulmans or visiters that might be among us. In answer to this, I told him that I believed we had not; but, that I thought, at the same time, that this was purely because we had very few or no visiters or residents of the Mahomedan religion among us. And to this, my friend who acted as interpreter, added, as he informed me, and doubtless with intent to compliment my country, that as we were considered in Europe, to be, after the Russians, the Germans, and the French, the most tolerant people in the world, there could be little doubt that, if any Tatars thought proper to come and settle

among us in sufficient number, that they would be admitted, if not to equal privileges with those who professed the proper religion of the country, at least to such as the Jews enjoyed, who, though not quite put on a level with the Christians, had many synagogues in our cities.

Our conversation still proceeded a little further upon the same subject. No one who is acquainted with the Koran, and the opinions which the Mahomedans hold of the Author of Christianity, and also with the opinions entertained by the reformed Jews in England concerning the Author of our religion, can fail to recognise one remarkable similarity, amid many wide differences, between the two opinions entertained by these people severally upon that particular head. The Moslems, it is clear, regard "Jesus the son of Mary" as a prophet only second to the author of their religion; while the reformed Jews, who have rejected the old scandal of imposture, still retained by the rest, regard "Jesus of Nazareth" as a reformer of the corruptions which crept into their system during the Babylonian captivity, and as a just as well as bold opponent of the hypocrisy of their priests, who persecuted him even to death.* There is between these two religions in relation to each other, also, a perfect agreement concerning the unity of the Deity, with entire exemption from the least approaches to idolatry.

These two circumstances in particular formed the subject for the rest of our discourse with our Mussulman friends; but as details concerning conversations that were not always very clear to the parties by whom they were held, would necessarily be very tedious, I shall only further report the answer of the chief

* Of which any one may have ample proof, by attending the cheerful little synagogue in Margaret Street, London.

among them, to a last question that was put to him, in order to sound, if possible, the depth of the liberal feelings which he seemed during our discourse to evince. It was asked the Mussulman, whether he did not think, that all the nations and people throughout the world, that under one form or another necessarily worshipped the same Deity, would in some later age, be of the same opinion upon all essential points in religion, and feel no scandal in performing their oraisons in unison, within the same, or in similar temples. But to this, the good Tatar, who had become now more grave than when our discourse began, only answered:—"God is great; and He made Mussulmans, and Christians, and Jews, and men of all other creeds; and He knew what was right." Then, after a puff or two at the chiboock, while this was repeating to me, he added:—"And men are only as the dust beneath His feet, and live in darkness; and, instead of searching to find out what was above their comprehension, it were better that they should rest satisfied with the knowledge they possess: that God is compassionate and merciful, but to men incomprehensible." Upon another occasion, however, the same Tatar much eulogised the Russian Government for its tolerance, and said that he considered that all religions in effect, in Russia, enjoyed perfect equality of privileges.

Some of the Tatars, that came from the countries bordering upon the Chinese empire, bore a nearer resemblance to the people of that country than any of the rest; but they were much finer men, both in stature and in carriage, than any of the Chinese that we see by accident in England. They had of course no women with them; nor did I see a Tatar woman, until I was several hundred versts east of Nijhni Novgorod.

I thought when there was no longer any doubt of my obtaining my passport, that at least all moral

obstacles in the way of carrying out my plans were at an end, and I began to make my little purchases and arrangements for my journey into Siberia. This, however, was not to be done in a day, as I had no servant and could obtain no other interpreter or aid than sometimes one and sometimes another of my three principal friends, Herr Kroft, Herr König, and Gospodin Koumanine, all of whom were much occupied with their affairs.

My good friends had severally undertaken, however, to do their utmost to find me a travelling companion among the dealers in Siberian and Chinese merchandise; but after a day or two's good offices in this way, two of the three became traitors to their engagements, from a very strange, though pardonable cause.

Every one knows what it is to be killed with kindness, as our English phrase runs; but it is not so common to find our friends conspire to arrest supposed danger by seeming unkindness. My Russian friend Gospodin Koumanine had commenced making some arrangements for me with a Tatar from Siberia, who was about to return to the seat of his affairs, when several of my friends, among whom was Herr Kroft, made a concerted attack upon this gentleman, on account of the aid he was giving me to prosecute my travels; and, in mere pity, they actually overthrew all that was done by my more confiding friend, towards forwarding my arrangements for the journey. They persuaded him that no sane person could contemplate going into Siberia, unless obliged by his commercial interests so to do; and by urging the dangers from robbers, bears, wolves, imprisonment under suspicion of having covert designs, and the effects of *ennui*, which they assured him in an Englishman always terminated in blowing out the brains, they succeeded in dissuading him from aiding me to complete the arrangements that he had himself commenced on my behalf.

It is wonderful how little is known in Russia Proper, of the world and its inhabitants beyond the mountains that divide Europe from Asia. Accustomed to connect with the country in Asia, the idea of exile, the Russians have a certain dread of its very name. The force of this feeling among the people generally may be easily imagined, when we find merchants accustomed to carry on business with the country, and even frequently to see parties who inhabit it, as will be shown in the sequel, but little acquainted, either with its condition, its resources, or the degree of security in which its inhabitants dwell. Thus, after I had had an interview with the Tatar traveller selected by my sometime faithful friend, and a long conversation with him concerning the proposed journey, my hopes were blown wholly to the winds.

I had previously consulted the governor, who I thought might be sending forward some officers on leave, or some officials upon public business to Siberia, with whom I might travel; but the prince recommended me by all means to travel with a merchant, if any one could be found about to undertake the journey, as there would be less restraint on my movements, and less necessity for keeping exact time.

In this state of my little affairs, I found myself left with only Herr König to aid my researches for a travelling companion; and, although I did not deem success in this, indispensable to accomplishing the journey, I was still desirous of finding some one with whom I might share the good and ill of the expedition.

Some days now passed before any thing occurred to excite fresh expectation, during which I passed my time alternately at the government house, and with the merchants to whom, as they were determined to give me no aid to accomplish what they deemed such a dangerous undertaking, I mentioned the matter no

more. At length, at the moment that I was about to make arrangements to travel alone, Herr König, always faithful to his promise, found a merchant of one of the Russo-German provinces, who was about to make a journey to Tomsk in Western Siberia, with some European goods purchased at the fair for an adventure; and to him he now introduced me; and, after half an hour's conversation, all arrangements were made; and this gentleman and myself agreed to set off together for this frightful land, after two days.

During the remaining time that I was at the fair, I was chiefly occupied, aided by my best friend, in completing my purchases and preparations for the journey which, if it presented no terrors, was not to be looked upon as free from inconveniences, or like a journey through a populous or civilised country.

I choose this opportunity to mention an instrument used for making calculations, which, although general in Russia, I had not, until engaged in this manner with a friend, an opportunity of fairly examining. It is called a *stchoti*, and is used by the native merchants every where, to the exclusion of every other method of making calculations, and by even the Germans and other foreign merchants in their ordinary reckonings, from its being found quicker and less liable to error than every other means of reckoning whatsoever.

The *stchoti* consists of a wooden frame, the size of which is indifferent; but in general it is about a foot long by about six inches in breadth, and has ten, but may have more, metal wires across it, upon every one of which there are ten sliding balls of wood. With this simple instrument, in consequence of the rubles and copeks admitting of the decimal calculations, the Russians are able to accomplish the most seemingly abstruse reckoning which their complicated commercial transactions involve, with wonderful rapidity and

exactness. Nevertheless, this is not done without long practice. When the art is once learned, however, it is practised and preferred by the Germans and other foreigners, to any other mode of calculation; and the instrument is to be seen in common use, even in the counting-houses of the merchants of the first guild whether native or foreign, both at St. Petersburg and Moscow, and at all the seaports in the empire.

The arrangements being completed for our journey towards the Ural mountains, on the 20th August I paid a farewell visit to the governor and his family. I came to the palace soon after noon, at which hour business is usually suspended in Russia, and I found the prince engaged in directing some workmen who were fitting up a large room for theatrical amateur performances, the profits of which were to be appropriated to charitable purposes, and the princess seated upon one of the benches intended to form the pit of the theatre. When I took leave of this noble and hospitable couple, they made me promise that I would visit them upon my return; and although it was not again in my power to see them, on account of the direction of my travels, their unaffected politeness is not the less indelibly engraven upon my memory.

As there are no *diligences*, and no other public carriages beyond Nijhni Novgorod, my future fellow-traveller had purchased for our use, one of the private travelling vehicles of the country, called a *tarantass*. Our place of rendezvous before our departure, was at a merchant's, at one of the corners of the great square before mentioned. When I arrived here with my effects, I found our carriage before the merchant's door; and my new companion soon made his appearance with a train of friends, among whom was the obliging Herr König and several other of my acquaintances.

The tarantass is a sort of long cabriolet with four

wheels, and has the body suspended upon ash poles which serve in the place of springs. That which my companion had provided, was rude enough externally, and within it was without seats or any substitute for them, and seemed little calculated for a travelling carriage. This most uncomfortable looking of vehicles, was just, however, what it should be; as it was necessary that we should carry bed, bedding, and everything proper to enable us to enjoy as much comfort as possible within, to counterbalance the rough roads and other inconveniences we must expect to encounter without; and our rude *tarantass* was in half an hour converted into a travelling vehicle containing all the most necessary furniture of a bedroom, storeroom, and kitchen. Everything, indeed, was so arranged as to make soft and convenient seats by day, and reclining couches by night; and it now seemed as if nothing could be more comfortable than our appointed equipage.

I shall long remember the quarter of an hour that preceded our departure. It was already late in the day, and besides our more immediate friends and acquaintances, there were a number of others to whom neither of us was more than slightly known, who came nevertheless to bid us farewell, and to express their hopes of seeing my companion again at the fair the following year, and myself at Moscow before the coming winter's snow disappeared. Our parting with all those we knew, was most gratifying to both of us. I thought commerce had too certainly hardened all hearts at Nijhni Novgorod, to admit a spark of sentiment upon a much greater occasion than the present. Even the good intentions displayed in the opposition I had encountered in making my arrangements, owing to my thinking only of the inconvenience which I feared it might occasion me, I had not yet rightly appreciated. But the parting hour having arrived, the care of the same friends to see us

off, and to see that we wanted nothing, and the concern and interest they now took in the success of our journey, and their last greeting, proved they had had no object in their opposition, save what arose from their gloomy impressions of the country to which we were going.

The scene, however, immediately before we mounted our carriage, and the manner of the leave-taking of some of our friends, was not precisely to an Englishman's taste. It was such, indeed, as requires that the whole soul should be engrossed with the sentiment that is "father to the act," to be patiently endured. Thus my travelling companion and his German and Russian friends fell to kissing, like a set of *grisettes* or school-girls, when one among them might be going upon a journey. My own turn, indeed, in this way came; but my friends were happily less numerous than the merchant's; and perhaps one ought to be content to be done with by the Russians, as the Russians do with one another. However, I recommend every English traveller in Russia, as he must have moustache at least, if he would not be peculiar, to wear always a monstrous pair. He cannot tell when he may want them, to defend him from the scratching of another's; and if always ready they may lessen at least, many a shock of the nerves, if he have any, before he is reconciled to the feminine mode of taking leave of friends and greeting their return.

The scene, however, that finally closed this eventful leave-taking, made some amends. Quite a crowd had by this time gathered to give us the last farewell. The whole party stood around our carriage; and, as the *yemstchik*, or postilion, mounted in front of us, and we all lifted our hats for the last time, they gave us three such cheers as those who know our seaports have often heard given to a brave vessel and her gallant crew, when about to glide out from the smooth waters of the haven, to be long at the mercy of the winds and waves.

## CHAP. VI.

### POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE RUSSIANS.

General Remarks.— Impressions entertained.— Degrees in the Progress of Society. — The Degree attained by the Russians. — Mixture of the Patriarchal and Monarchical Systems.—Nobility. —Serfs.— Popular rural Institutions.

BEFORE commencing the account of the journey through the wide countries which lie before us, it will be as well to pause for a moment, to consider briefly some of the more remarkable and least known, or least appreciated, of the institutions of the Russians. It is first, however, necessary to make a few remarks upon the general system of which they form a part.

Perhaps as Englishmen, in our conscious pride in our own political institutions we are too much accustomed unthinkingly or unjustly to regard those of other nations with feelings of disdain. But if we would estimate truly the laws and institutions of any people, we ought to consider what is their state of advancement, and what the adaptation of their laws to the degree of refinement or intelligence at which the mass of the population has arrived. Now, if we take a very slight glance over what history in general presents to us, concerning the institutions which have enabled men to live in a state of society, and thereby to reap the benefit of the concentrated labours of the community, we perceive several distinct degrees in their progress, which for our present purpose may be divided into four grand periods. The first of these may be called the patriarchal; the second, the aristocratical; the third, that of simple monarchy; and the fourth, the constitutional.

The first, or patriarchal form of government, was evidently founded directly in nature; and it was happy for mankind that the bonds which first united them in society, were the paternal and filial affections. But such a government, in its purity, was adapted only for small or errant tribes, having but one simple idea concerning government, which was obedience, and who were strangers to any other system, by the knowledge of which their respect for the patriarch of their commonwealth might have been diminished, and who were not exposed to the aggression of strangers. But the history of this period is so often mixed with fable, that it is difficult to determine what degree of happiness, "our being's end and aim," men did then really enjoy.

During the second, or aristocratic period, mankind were probably seen in their truest state of barbarism. Patriarchal and filial feelings no longer existed beyond the domestic hearth; and war was then the most constant and the most terrible, and the manners of men were the most depraved. Thus the annals of this age, of those European nations with whose history we are the most familiar, form but a register of oppressions at home, and of perpetual wars with every neighbour.

The third period, or that of simple monarchy, appears like a return to that of nature, after the experience of ages of anarchy and barbarism. It is now that we first find security of property sufficiently established to encourage the accumulation of wealth and the necessary leisure for the cultivation of the arts and sciences, by which the labours of men are combined and made to react upon the sources that nourish them.

Reverting to the political institutions of Russia, we can scarcely fail to observe, that this great empire, is at this time in the third period of its social existence, though its institutions differ from those which prevail

in the other simple monarchies which still exist in the more advanced nations of Western Europe, by reason of the unequal progress of the different classes of the people, which has been owing to the early refinement of the court, and the necessarily slower advance among a widely distributed and numerous population. Thus in Russia there has arisen a mixture of the patriarchal or first form of government, with the monarchical in its simple and absolute character; and it follows that, if we would form a true judgment concerning the institutions under which her vast population live, we must not forget their origin, the stages through which they have passed, and their relations to the state of civilisation which has been attained; and we must avoid confounding these with such as belong to governments in a different stage of their development, or with institutions, in the formation of which different circumstances have led to different results.

From this mixture in the Russian government, of the patriarchal and monarchical elements, have proceeded great practical results, which are apparent in all the institutions of society; but especially in the classification of the people, and the organization of the rural institutions, throughout a great portion of the empire.

The classification of the Russian population is more arbitrary and more distinct than that of any other people. For our purpose it is sufficient to observe that, partly by law and partly by custom, the whole people are divided into four orders: the nobility, which in the widest sense of the term includes all the civil and military officers of the government; the *grajdane* or citizen, which comprehends the merchants, manufacturers, artisans, and all the trading population generally; the *mujiks* or peasantry, both free and in the condition of serfs; and the clergy.

The nobility submit by law to a division into no less than fourteen grades, in eight of which the privileges they enjoy were formerly hereditary and descended to all the members of the family alike; but by an ukase of the present sovereign, the hereditary privilege has been limited to the first five grades.

The highest title enjoyed by such of the Russian nobility as are not of the imperial family, is that of prince. The Russian princes are for the most part desended from the ancient chiefs of the independent sovereignties or principalities of the country, and some of them are of Tatar families. The rights and immunities of the nobles generally, were determined by an ukase of Peter the Great, and they are numerous. But neither the princes, nor any other among the higher of the order, such as counts and barons, in the main enjoy higher privileges than the rest of the nobility of the five superior grades.

A great part of the lands belong to the higher classes of the nobility. This gives them a proportionate interest in the agricultural industry of the country, in which is comprehended the labour of about twenty millions of the peasantry.

There is a great practical difference between the operation of the hereditary principle among the Russians and among ourselves. The Russian proprietor, is not tempted to perpetuate his glory through unborn generations, by any partial distribution of his property. By the laws of the realm, one-seventh of the landed estate passes upon the decease of the proprietor, to his widow in perpetuity, one-fourteenth to every daughter, and the residue to the sons equally.

The relations subsisting between the nobility possessed of estates and the peasantry that cultivate them, are similar to those which prevailed in Western Europe during our middle age. The proprietor is the feudal

lord, and the tenant is his serf; and the natural consequences of these obligations with which our own history has rendered us familiar, are those to which the Russian peasant is now submitted.

The second order of the people, according to the manner in which they have been above classed, consists of the *grajdanes* or citizens. It comprises all the free Russians that are not noble, such as merchants, manufacturers, and artisans, and some of the agriculturists, and admits of a subdivision into many classes. The highest of these are called *pocket-neeye-grajdanes* (free citizens), and is composed of such as have in any way distinguished themselves in their profession or art.

The *mujiks* or peasants of the various classes, compose the lowest order in the state. About forty millions of these are serfs; and about half of that number are attached to the estates of the nobility, and the rest belong to the crown.

The remaining order of the Russian people comprises the clergy of every class, both of the predominant and of the several other Churches.

With Russian subjects, from the prince to the serf there is no difference in their relation to the sovereign. To the sovereign all his subjects are as the members of one family, and equal to one another. But this will more particularly appear, if we take a slight review of the rural institutions which are established throughout several districts and in the villages, in many parts of the country.

These institutions belong to the patriarchal component of the mixed form of government above described. Their organisation is of a popular character, and they present so remarkable a feature in the Russian system of government and social economy generally, that they ought not to be passed over, in the shortest account

that could be given of the country. Their organisation is not, however, in all parts where they prevail, alike. But we will chiefly consider them in those districts where the serfs of the crown are in the majority, and where the crown is more free to perform what it lists, and where too, they have lately undergone modifications which will doubtless ere long lead to a similar reorganisation of all the rest.

The institution is a community, or commune, formed after the model of a family, in the relation of its members to one another and to their common head, upon a more or less grand scale. The chief, or presiding magistrate, is elected by the suffrages of the people, and is variously named, according to the degree of importance of the particular society over which he presides, as we shall presently see. This body possesses all the soil that lies within the bounds of its ascendancy, of which every member is entitled to an equal proportion, but of which he enjoys only the usufructs. Thus at the decease of a father of a family, the estate which he has enjoyed, does not go to his children, but reverts to the whole society, every individual member of which is entitled to an equal share. Thus, it will be seen, that this community and the grand family of the nation are herein the copy and reflex of one another. The sovereign is the chief of the whole nation, and every community severally is one of the members of his grand family, all of which are equally under his patriarchal authority and protection.

The communities are of three degrees of importance, in relation to the extent of territory and the population which they comprehend. Those of the simplest organisation, consist severally of a single village; those in the next degree above these, include several villages, and are called *selskoie-obschestvo* (rural communities); and those of the highest degree of organisation are

composed of several *selskoie-obschestvo*, and are called *volost*.

At the head of each of the village communities, there is a chief, who is elected by the suffrages of the peasants themselves, and called *starosta* (ancient). This officer thus elected, is aided by a council of ten, the members of which are elected by a majority of the fathers of families. By this little court, all minor judicial affairs of the village are conducted; but the members of the *starosta*'s council, do not remain more than a month in power by law, though they are not usually changed in a less period than a year. The *starosta* receives a salary from the government, of 158 rubles assignat a-year; but his aids in his judicial labours do not receive any pecuniary compensation. Some of the lesser villages possess, however, only a chief called *dessidtsky*, who has no salary.

The *selskoie-oschestvo*, which comprise several villages, are composed of five or six hundred fathers of families. These are presided over by a chief called a *stachina*, who is chosen by the votes of deputies, of which every village sends two. He enjoys a stipend of between 300 and 400 rubles assignat a-year. These have also courts, presided over by the *stachina*, and two assistants called *zassidytelli*. The power of the courts is, however, very limited, and, in civil disputes does not extend to matters exceeding the value of five silver rubles. The *volost*, or community of the highest degree of importance, including several *selskoie-oschestvo*, is presided over by a chief called a *golova* (head), who is elected in a similar manner to the rest of the chiefs of these societies, for the period of three years. Nevertheless, the civil chief of the district in which the *volost* is situated, is required to give his opinion upon the choice of the *golova*, which is sent to the chamber of the domain, or civil council, which is established in every department,

by whom it is presented to the governor, with whom rests the power to confirm or reject the candidate proposed by the peasants.

The *golova* may be re-elected for another three years, provided that, during the whole time of his first three years' service, no just complaint has been preferred against him. His salary is in most cases about 600 rubles, but in some cases more.

Each *volost* has also its court of justice, under the presidency of the *golova* and two assistants, and a jurisdiction in matters not exceeding fifteen rubles. At the court of the *golova*, there is also an appeal from that of the *stachina;* but the authority of the *golova* extends only to reduce the amount of penalties awarded, or to arrest the execution of judgment, where this may be deemed necessary, until reference be made to the *okroujnoi-natschatnik*, or rural chief of the department.

We are now at the point where these popular institutions blend themselves with the grand political organisation of Russia. Every department, or grand government, is composed of several *volosts*, which are presided over by the *okroujnoi-natschatnik*, who, being placed under the control of the chamber of domains before mentioned, becomes the link by which the unity of the double chain of institutions is accomplished.

It is now necessary to make a few remarks upon the peculiar relations between the boyars and their serfs, amidst these popular institutions.

Out of a population of about 65,000,000, there are in Russia about 40,000,000 in that state of bondage which some denominate slavery, and others serfage; but which at least resembles, though it is not exactly the same as, that of our peasantry under the feudal system of the middle ages. These serfs are nearly all of the purely Russian blood of the Sclavonic race, very

few of the rest of the several other races, having been at any time subjected to the same degradation. We must refer to the origin of these relations between the noble and the peasant, in order to show their true character.

Previous to the year 1601, no such obligations existed between the owners of the soil and the peasants that worked it, and no constrained labour was known. In that year, however, the usurper, Boris Godonnoff, passed an ukase, or decree, by which the peasants were restrained from migrating, or changing their residence, which reduced them at once to the condition of serfs *glebæ adscripti.* From this time, however, they gradually became more and more under the authority of the boyars, and petty proprietors, to whose lands they were attached, until the reign of Peter the Great, at which epoch, when all things tended to settled principles and determinate ends, they became, merely by chance, or by the force of the severity with which all parties in the state exacted the obligations which custom had established, at least *de facto* slaves, and transferable at the will of their liege lords. But it is remarkable, that they have not been, even up to this time, reduced by direct ukase to absolute servitude *de jure.*

It is by ukase and the law, indeed, that this vital portion of the civil life of the state in Russia, has been preserved from the utter annihilation with which it has been at times threatened. From the time of Peter the Great, the sovereigns of Russia have frequently taken measures to soften the severity of bondage, and to define the relations of the lord and the serf, until, by a late ukase of the present emperor, the amount of labour which can be exacted from them is definitively fixed at three days in the week, and the right of the boyar to detach them from the soil is prohibited; and thus the rigour introduced during the

iron age of Peter the Great, has been happily abolished.

With respect to the relative condition of the serfs of the crown, and those of the nobility, the advantage lies upon the side of the former; and this is principally apparent in the privileges of the communities above described, but also in the greater facility with which they obtain permission to work on their own account, upon the payment of a certain gage, called as before mentioned *obrok*. Yet it is probable that, in the rare instances of proprietors found living the greater portion of the year upon their estates, the serfs are upon the whole more fortunately situated than those of the crown, as these must necessarily be exposed to all the inconveniences attending the absence of their liege lord.

In concluding this concise account of these remarkable institutions, I cannot avoid observing, that they appear to me to afford the fairest field that might be anywhere found, for the study of those benevolent men of other countries where slavery still prevails, who desire to manumit the degraded race among them, but can conceive no means of so doing that might not be attended with more evil than good. Yet they have excited no attention or interest beyond the bounds of the Russian empire.

## CHAP. VII.

### RELIGION OF THE RUSSIANS.

The national Church of Russia.— Origin.— Character.— Influence upon the Manners of the People.— Constitution.— Remarkable Tenets.— Tolerance.— Dissenters.— Effect of the Church upon International Relations.— Fanaticism of Dissenters.— Russian and Romish Churches compared.— Effects of the Ordinance of partial Celibacy.— Anomalies.

THERE is no feature, in the purely Russian character, more strongly and more generally marked, than the profound veneration for the religious institutions which are established in the empire. On this account, it is incumbent, before we mingle with the inhabitants of the interior and more distant provinces, to give some consideration to the character of the proper Russian Church, and to make a few observations concerning several other remarkable religious institutions, which exist in different districts of the country. We shall then have fresh in our memory such of the leading principles upon which Russian nationality is based, as cannot fail to aid every inquiry concerning the modes of life and manners of the people among whom we shall have occasion to mingle during the greater part of these travels.

The true birth of the existing Russian Church was coëval with the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, which, being before the demise of our Henry VI., was nearly a century before the people of this country escaped from the trammels of the Western Church. At this epoch, without any change in the

religious rites or form of government of the Eastern or Greek Church, the metropolitan of Russia was elected and consecrated without reference to the patriarch of Constantinople; and, in 1551, a general synod, held at Moscow, framed a code of ecclesiastical laws called the *Stolgav* or Hundred Chapters.

Russia, however, continued still to suffer the inconveniences incident to the existence of two powers temporal and spiritual, in the state, independent of each other. This introduced elements of discord into all the institutions of society, until Peter the Great united these powers in his own person, and thus converted the Church, that until now had been rather a clog upon the efforts of the czars to improve the people, into a means, independent of religious considerations, of promoting general civilisation. This grand reform was effected by the Russian sovereign, by the abolition of the patriarchal dignity, upon the decease of the patriarch Adrian, in 1702, and the establishment of a supreme ecclesiastical council under the name of the Most Holy Synod, and by proclaiming himself, henceforth, the supreme head of the Church.

Since this final settlement, the Church has undergone no other changes than some practical measures of amelioration, which have been, from time to time, introduced by the successors of the great founder of the independent Church.

The Russian Church may be considered, then, to be thus now constituted: The emperor is the supreme head of the Church, and all ecclesiastical affairs are administered by the council or synod such as it was established by Peter the Great, and which is composed both of ecclesiastical and lay members, not limited in number.

The synod, as regularly constituted, consists of two metropolitans, two bishops, the highest secular priest of

the realm, the procurator or attorney-general, two secretaries of state, five under-secretaries, and a certain number of the lesser officials in the civil service of the government.

Among the most remarkable of the ordinances of the Russian Church, considered in regard to its influence upon the manners of the people, is the partial celibacy of the clergy, and the rigour with which marriage is exacted where celibacy is not enjoined. Thus, while with the higher dignitaries, who are always of the monastic order, which is termed that of the black clergy, celibacy is required, with those of the secular order, or that of the white clergy, who are of every grade, and are called popes, marriage is enjoined even before they can be ordained. Nevertheless, the popes, in case of the decease of their wives, cannot form a second alliance; and consequently in that event, they usually enter the monastic order, through which they may now attain the highest dignities.

The dissenting sects appear to be numerous, and to have existed at almost all periods of the Church's history. We need here, however, only notice those which most excite our curiosity from the peculiar relations which they bear to the predominant Church, or from the extraordinary character of the tenets which they maintain.

Dissent generally, in the Churches and religions of the world, appears to have arisen out of attempts to reform or change the existing order of things, by those who seem, in a worldly point of view, the least interested in preserving what happens to be established. But the sect which is at least the most important of all those that dissent from the established Church in Russia, is composed of such as have resisted both changes and reforms, similar to those for which dissenters in other Churches and countries, have contended and suffered martyrdom, by thousands. It must be also remarked, that,

as this dissent took place after the virtual independence of the Church, though before the union of the crown and mitre, the sect is as free from the dangerous influence of the priests of foreign and less enlightened countries, as the dissenters from our established Church are from the influence of the priests of any foreign country whatsoever. Thus, though these dissenters have been at one time persecuted in Russia, they are at the present day respected by all parties; and, though sometimes included under the general term of *rokolniks*, (or schismatics), they are more generally termed *stavoobradtzee*, which signifies literally *of the old rite*, and still more frequently *starovertzi*, or literally, old believers.

The reform which was the cause of this grand dissent appears, as might have been expected among a people so devoted to religion as the Russians, to have had great influence in the change of their manners, and, certainly, a wholesome influence, in admitting among them many customs which were before common to other nations though unknown in Russia, and thus paving the way for the nearer alliance which has since existed between their country and the rest of the states of Europe. Among these, the custom of shaving and the use of tobacco were the most remarkable. Thus, shaving the beard at least, is now general among the more refined classes, and the use of tobacco among all classes belonging to orthodox rites. In the meantime, the *starovertzi* rigorously abstain from both these customs, which, however little they may be commended, have certainly tended to assimilate the people more nearly with the Western and more generally civilised nations.

As to the habit of smoking, which is common among all classes in all parts of the empire, and that of taking snuff, which is general among the peasants in many parts, I do not think the orthodox puffers are inferior

in their vocation, even to the Germans, who have been hitherto deemed the most accomplished people in Europe in puffing the sedative or exciting weed, nor have I known anywhere greater snuff-takers than the Russian peasants.

Of these two abominations in the eyes of the *staro-vertzi*, that of shaving is the greatest. By the laws of Moses, say these good people, men were forbidden to cut off their beards, and as those laws which are not expressly abrogated by the new dispensation are still binding upon Christian men, the beard cannot be taken off without an act of impiety. Moreover, they add, that the Author of their religion, according to all the representations that they have ever seen of him, wore his beard; and, indeed, that he could not have done otherwise, seeing that in his character of man he was a Jew.

The dissenting sects of all denominations, are said to be not less than fifty in number, and to include every degree of superstition, from the more moderate which arises from the mere veil drawn by misguided zeal over their better reason, to the most gross and the most shocking that were ever combined with the name of Christianity. Some have no priests. But these, many Italians and many Spaniards might say, must be the most fortunate of them all. Others only differ in certain rites which appear to us to be mere childish objects of contention. Others have merely their churches built in different forms from the rest, but would think it monstrously wicked to enter any house of prayer of any other form than that in which their own is constructed.

The most curious and original among the dissenting bodies, however, is a sect which are called Theodosians. The point in which these differ most remarkably from all the rest, is in the total separation of the sexes at

the celebration of the rites and ceremonies of their worship, even to each sex possessing distinct churches, and to the administration of all the offices of religion, not excepting the mass, by the women in the temples appointed for their use. The offices, however, are only performed by the elder spinsters among them, to all of whom the sect attach a degree of veneration accorded, I believe, to no spinsters in any orthodox or state church in any other country whatsoever. They are distinguished by the term *Christona namiesta*, the Betrothed of Christ.

But the sect which is the most extravagant, and which has alone excited any degree of abhorrence among the Russian people generally, is distinguished chiefly by a practice among the men of reducing themselves voluntarily to the condition of the keepers of the hareems in the countries where Mussulman manners prevail. This folly and wickedness, however, is not practised until after their marriage and the birth of one child. But, what is most strange of all is, that after this they continue to live happily with their wives, who are permitted or constrained so to deport themselves that their families may increase. And when this happens, the children are adopted by the victim of fanaticism, and treated precisely as if they were his own. It is to the honour, however, of the Russian government, that every possible endeavour has been made to suppress these diabolical usages, by making the parties that practise them amenable to the criminal law, and by sending such as are convicted of the offence, into exile in Siberia.

Returning to what properly regards the predominant Church, we cannot fail to be struck with the advantages which the Russian Church possesses over the Church of Rome, as well in its effects upon the morals of the people, as in relation to the world, at large.

One of the first things that strikes a Protestant stranger after his arrival in Russia, is the great tolerance, not only of the state, but even of the clergy and people, whether towards foreigners, or towards the different sects within the country. In a single street in the modern metropolis, and that too in which he finds the much-frequented Cathedral of Kazan, he may enter a Lutheran church, a Romish church, one belonging to the Sunnites, another to the Schütes, an Armenian church, and, at least, two more of the very names of which he perhaps never heard before. But, besides these, he may find many other churches of other sects, in the different parts of the town, including, of course, an English church.

The next advantage of the Russian Church over the Italian, is the performance of the divine offices in a known tongue, the Sclavonic, which, though it may at this day be considered by many as at least a half-dead language, is nevertheless better than the Latin, on account of its being still intelligible to the classes that most need instruction.

The reading of the Scriptures, both in private and in public, the former of which the clergy rather recommend than discourage, may also be considered among the advantages of the Russian Church.

Certain restrictions, however, are conjoined with this privilege, though not every one even among ourselves, perhaps, will differ from the Russian clergy concerning the value of these. By the Russians, it is deemed improper that girls at too tender an age should be acquainted with the history of vices and crimes found in the Old Testament more especially, but also in the New. All of the delicate sex, therefore, are restricted, until they attain the age of thirty, from acquiring any other knowledge of the sacred writings, than such as they may obtain from passages that are

read in the churches, and from the portions that appear in certain authorised publications.

But the most important of all the advantages which the Russian Church seems to possess over the Romish, is in the marriage of the clergy, under the regulations before mentioned. No one who has not been much in the more unenlightened of the Romish countries, can be fully acquainted with the demoralisation that springs from the canon of the Church which enjoins the celibacy of the whole sacerdotal order, or appreciate fully how necessary above all things, for the interests of morality, is the married life on the part of the clergy, beyond that of all other classes of men. Did no greater corruption of manners, indeed, spring out of the unhallowed restraint, than such as serves to furnish the theatres of these countries with subjects of laughter, the clergy might have, as the canon now stands, more extenuating circumstances to offer in excuse for their irregularities, than any other class of men. But these are light and venial errors, indeed, compared with many that prevail among them. But it must be understood, that reference is chiefly made here to the Italian section of the Romish Church, and by no means to those sections where the Church has no direct political influence, and no undue power over the unenlightened masses, and, last of all, to that section which forms a part of our own population, which only wants the first step, taken by the Russians in their several reforms, of electing their own metropolitan or pope, to be perfectly British, and all that we need desire.

It is to be regretted, however, in the Russian Church, that there are still some restrictions upon the clergy, in a matter that has been found so advantageous to religion and morals, both among ourselves, and in all Protestant countries. The higher dignitaries of the Church, must

proceed, as above mentioned, from convents alone, and remain bound by their vows. And again, the secular clergy, the most numerous and important body of the order, are subjected to obligations concerning their marriage, which, though the effects of this are partial, cannot be commended by any Protestant strangers in Russia. All who belong to this class are under the obligation to marry at too early an age, and are restricted to once only contracting matrimony.

With regard to the restriction to once only contracting matrimony, it may be said, that when the priest is deprived of his wife, his condition is henceforth no better than that of a priest of the Romish Church.

Two strange anomalies exist in the Russian Church, which it must be confessed withdraw something from the general spirit of tolerance which is upon the whole predominant, and which is so refreshing and agreeable to discover. The English traveller in Russia will be often perhaps surprised, but certainly delighted, in observing practical instances of charity towards all men; yet, if he should chance to have with him the fair partner of his joys and his sorrows, or his daughter, or his sister, and desire to enter the *ikonostas* or portion of the churches that exhibits the brilliant objects which peculiarly attract the livelier or more refined curiosity of the ladies, he must by no means cross the threshold of the holy place before he has cast off his companion, as not quite worthy, on account of her sex, as we are obliged to interpret the law, of treading upon the holy ground within. Had the celibacy of the secular clergy, indeed, been a law of the Church, we might have put a different construction upon this ungallant treatment of the ladies.

The other of the two anomalies alluded to, is of a very different character, and would shock a stranger

much more, if he were to enter a church on the 7th of March, with his ears open to understand the Sclavonic tongue, especially if he were at the same time but little acquainted with the people of the country. Upon that day he would hear priests of the most truly charitable and kindly Christian character, who daily bless everything and everybody, now pronounce such anathemas upon all heretics both dead and alive, that he would suppose himself listening to men who believed themselves to be the messengers of wrath of an offended and unrelenting Deity. Some Russians with whom I entered a church on this particular day, in a distant part of the empire, called this, indeed, a mere relic of the barbarous customs which prevailed in a darker age of the Church's history; and they thought that it would be soon altogether abandoned.

## CHAP. VIII.

### JOURNEY FROM NIJHNI NOVGOROD TOWARDS KAZAN.

Aspect of the Country.— Brilliancy of the Night.— Modes of Travelling.— The Samovar.— Russian Villages.— Serfs.— Peasants. — Night Travelling.— The Crops.— Tea at a Village.

THE days were still hot, but the nights were cool, when we commenced our journey towards the Ural Mountains; and the sky, in which I had not indeed seen a cloud since descending the river Thames, early in June, save once during a squall in the Gulf of Finland, exhibited on all sides its wonted deep azure, save in the quarter where the sun was about to set.

The first town at which we were to make any stay, was the ancient Tatar city of Kazan. The traveller leaving Nijhni Novgorod, and taking an easterly course, will not be without lively anticipations concerning the objects of interest about to present themselves to his observation. The site of the great fair, and the Volga, form the western limit to which the merchants of the East travel to exchange their wares with those who come from the West; and a few only, among all the unshorn native merchants, have occasion to proceed eastward of this great place of exchange. Thus, we must expect to witness other scenes, and observe greater varieties of character, at the hearth of the people of different origin among whom we are about to travel, than those with which we are yet familiar. And, just in proportion as the darkness of the night enhances the

impressions which the "imagination bodies" into form, must the silence and indifference of the Russians concerning the vast territory which lies beyond the Ural Mountains, excite the curiosity of the traveller on his way to these remote parts of this empire.

The first part of our road lay across a country watered by streams which ran along the bottom of narrow vales, and which, as long as it was day, presented to us vast fields, redundant with ripening crops of the bread-corns. The streams, however, that water the country, lie so far beneath the surface of the plain, as to give all the inconveniences to a traveller, of a sharply undulated country, without its ordinary relief of picturesque scenes. The road, too, we found the roughest on which either of us had ever travelled in a wheeled carriage.

For the first two hours of the night, the stars, which shone with a brilliancy which might scarcely be surpassed in the tropics, lighted us upon our rapid way; and, after this, the moon in her third quarter, rendered the night almost as brilliant as the day. Notwithstanding the roughness of the road, we contrived to sleep at intervals; and, when daylight appeared, after two changes of horses, which we had made in the night, we were galloping over a rough and broad road, planted with double rows of birch trees upon either side, and through a plain country, abounding in corn-crops, but so divested of both useful and ornamental wood, save formal rows of planted trees, whose tortuous course might be traced for miles, as to present to us but a dreary prospect.

There are two ways of engaging horses in travelling in a private carriage in Russia. In one case, the traveller hires those which are provided every where by the government at proper stations; and, in the other, they are hired of the peasants at the villages, in-

differently, through which the road passes. But, such is the number of the horses and the plentifulness of their fodder in most parts of the country, that travellers generally prefer, as far, at least, as this state of things obtains, hiring of the peasants, with whom they make better terms than with the agents of the government; and this arrangement was made by my fellow-traveller.

Soon after sunrise we arrived at a small village, where we again changed; and, as the custom is, we breakfasted at the house of the peasants that provided us with fresh horses.

The first cry of a traveller in Russia, before alighting at the house of a peasant, with whom his bargain for his horses is usually already made, is for the *samovar*. This is what we should call a tea-urn; but it differs from our urn in the manner in which it is adapted for heating the water and maintaining it boiling. Instead of requiring that the water should be heated before it is put into it, and kept hot by means of a red-hot piece of iron, it is provided with a small grate, in which the fire is made beneath the body of the urn, by which means the water is heated and kept hot for as long a time as it is required. It is said that no Russian house is without this essential article. I met but one disappointment on this account, in any part of the country inhabited by people of Russian origin, throughout my travels. If the Russian *mujik* or peasant were to be without the *samovar*, it would indicate a degree of poverty which does not exist, or, at least, does not appear, in any part of the Russian empire inhabited by, or where the inhabitants are mingled with, men of the Sclavonic race.

When hot water is required, the *samovar* is placed outside the door of the house, and the traveller has scarcely time to refresh himself by the good practice of

bathing his hands and face, before the water is ready. The *samovar* is now brought into the house, and the tea is made as we are wont to make it; but usually the Russian tea-pot is of more liberal dimensions than ours. This same *samovar* is indeed so constantly called for, that, where there is much travelling, custom has established a price, even among the peasants, for its use, which is ten copecks, or about five-pence English; and this, indeed, is taken by those who would not receive anything from a traveller for a lodging and any quantity of viands he might consume in their houses.

Travellers in Russia always carry with them a liberal supply of tea and sugar; and such is the love of the Russians for the sober beverage, which the peasants cannot always obtain, that when we know that we shall not be allowed to pay for the viands we receive, the tea is often shared with the inmates of the house, by way of slightly compensating them for the solids consumed. The advantage, however, was generally so notoriously upon our side in this respect upon this journey, that very often we could not leave their houses with a good conscience, without forcing them to accept of an ounce or two of tea from our dry stock.

A Russian village is generally one of a number belonging to the same estate, and distributed throughout an extensive tract of country, through which it is probable one public road alone passes, upon which the better sort of the villages are situated.

Those which are at a distance from the public roads, several of which we had subsequently the opportunity of visiting, consist generally of very poor wood houses, set apart from one another, and possess no church. Those upon the main roads consist, for the most part, of two long rows of wood houses, between which the road passes, and have a church, at which the inhabitants assemble on Sundays from the surrounding

country. The houses of the better sort of these villages are also of wood; and it is rare to see a single one among them painted, unless it be that of a *zassidytelle*, or petty magistrate, in the village where he may happen to reside. In the greater part of these villages, the houses stand twenty or thirty yards from each other, the spaces between them being occupied in many instances by vegetable gardens, and in others by straw-yards, or sheep-folds, or put to other uses appertaining to the vocations of the tenants of the houses. The style of building is, for the greater part, uniform. The houses generally consist of one story, with a loft beneath a roof, and are almost always placed with their gable ends towards the road, and have the door in the yard. The reason for this arrangement of the streets and buildings of the village, which is also common in small towns, and in the suburbs of cities, is to stop the course of the flames during the fires which are more frequent, and commit more ravages, in Russia than in any other country in the world.

The roofs of the houses generally extend several feet beyond the end wall of the building, and beneath them there is usually a little railed gallery, with a door leading to it from the loft. This is sometimes a sleeping-room, and sometimes a work-room for the women. Owing to this manner of placing the building so far apart, a village which does not contain above a hundred or two inhabitants will often extend to the length of a verst; and many that do not contain a much greater population, reach to the length of between two and three versts.

The inhabitants of the villages which we visited in this part of Russia, were chiefly serfs, following the same occupation as the peasants in our rural districts. A few of these, however, and the greater part of the free men, when they are found in the villages, follow the vocations of mechanics and tradesmen.

We were, at this time, at too early a period in our journey to want any other necessaries from the peasants at whose houses we alighted than the contents of the *samovar*. The first of these dwellings into which we entered, gave us no very good opinion of the domestic comforts and cleanliness of the people. It consisted of two rooms, one of which was full of farm-yard implements; and in the other, in which we took our tea, there were several dirty women, and several very dirty children half naked, and about half a score of barn-door fowls.

I had been surprised at hearing, before our departure from Nijhni Novgorod, that it was the constant custom of the country to travel as well by night as by day, for which two reasons are given. In the first place, there are to be found no beds upon which travellers could sleep comfortably, and if they use their own, at the season we were travelling especially, they would soon find them in a condition that might endanger all future comfort during the journey. In the second place, the distances between towns and places in Russia are so great, that if the traveller were to arrest his progress during the nights, which, as they are rarely dark in high latitudes, is seldom necessary, it would seem as if a journey would never end. The first of these reasons, it was already clear, was well founded, and we did not require to be much longer acquainted with the country, before we had abundant reason to be satisfied in every respect with the advice we had received, and with the arrangements we had made for our journey. Thus, upon this first occasion of our stopping, as soon as we had well eaten of our travelling stock, and taken tea with the peasant's family, we gladly remounted our *tarantass*, and continued our way.

The country was still fine, and abounding in luxuriant

corn-crops. About mid-day, we attained an elevation which afforded us a noble view of the Volga, with more picturesque scenery than any that I had seen up to this time in Russia. The towns of Ostashikna and Makarief appeared, seated in the midst of a rich plain, which was spread out before the view. The locality, too, is memorable, from its being the site upon which the great fair was held, until, as above mentioned, it was removed to Nijhni Novgorod.

We arrived at the little town of Ostashikna about two hours after noon. Here we observed two or three houses painted, which, from their rarity in the inferior towns and villages of Russia, we found refreshing to the sight; and there was a neat church, also painted. All this excess of luxury, we were told, was owing to the town being the place of residence of the proprietor of the estate upon which it stands, and of one of the *zassidytelli* of the district. We dined here, upon our own stock, at the house of one of the townsmen from whom we obtained our horses, in tolerable comfort; and, after but a short stay, continued our journey.

At dark, we arrived at the considerable village of Tschougouni, where we took tea, in company with a party of much cleaner people than those with whom we had breakfasted; and an Englishman could not be otherwise than much amused to see about half a dozen good women sitting over a tea-pot full of the Chinese beverage which we had handed them, in the attitude in which the worthy women of our country who re-whiten our linen, are said to sit over their tea, after their day's labour is accomplished. They had drawn two benches opposite to each other; and upon these they sat face to face, without any table between them, the greater part cross-legged, with the elbow of the right arm resting upon the upper knee, and

the saucer-full of tea upon the wide-spread fingers of the right hand, while, with their impatient mouths, they alternately ruffled the surface and sipped portions of the hot beverage so much prized by them, and happily not dear in this part of Russia.

## CHAP. IX.

### JOURNEY FROM NIJHNI NOVGOROD TOWARDS KAZAN:—CONTINUED.

The Tcherameese.—Their Condition in Russia.—Their Religion.—Manners.—Character of their Villages.—The State of their Knowledge.—Their Women.—Fertility of their Country.—Roads.—Tschébocksary, Tcherameese District Town.—Their Loyalty.—Rural Economy.—Horrid Roads.—Sandy Plain.—Meeting with a Russian Officer.—Town of Sviajsk.—A Pilgrim Pope.—Passage of the Volga.—Arrival at Kazan.—The Caravansary.

EARLY upon the morning of the third day of our journey we arrived at the first of the villages of the Tcherameese, a considerable people occupying some extent of territory in this part of Russia.

The Tcherameese are supposed to be a tribe of the Finnish race, before mentioned as one of the branches of the grand Caucasian family, and mixed since a remote period with the Tatars. Their language is a dialect of the Finnish, mingled with that of the Tatars; and they seem to have no affinity with the Russian race, which they neither resemble in feature nor disposition: and, like the Finns and the Tatars, they have never been subjected to the yoke of serfage.

The condition of this people, affords an extraordinary example of the tolerance and cosmopolite feelings generally prevailing in Russia. The religious and social institutions under which the Tcherameese live, are widely different from those of the Russians. In some particulars they are immeasurably inferior, while in others they are worthy of being copied, by the inhabitants of the rural

districts of other races, in many parts of the country. But neither is this peculiar race persecuted for practices which must shock their Christian and Moslem neighbours alike, nor imitated in the admirable economy apparent in all that concerns their daily pursuits. Though they dwell in the very heart of a Christian nation, and are politically under Christian government, and speak a language mingled with that of the Moslems, who are more easily scandalised than even Christians at the least approaches to idolatry, yet are they idolaters and sorcerers, addicted to practices that ought to be abhorrent to every rational creature. Among the most remarkable, however, of the superstitions with which their religion abounds, there is one from which they derive the same advantage which their neighbours of the other races obtain from exciting terror in the minds of those whom they cannot inspire with love; and, for our prince of darkness and that of the Moslems, with his "everlasting bonfire," they have the return of the spirits of bad men from the grave, which are continually engaged in tormenting the wicked upon earth.

But if we turn to the better side of their character, we shall find them remarkable for sobriety and industry, and for the propriety of their lives. In the external arrangements of their villages and their grounds, they even display an inclination towards the cultivation of the fine arts which has never entered into the heads of the light-hearted, and less steady and less thoughtful Sclavonian peasant. This difference in character, among the agriculturists in particular, of these two races is no doubt, to a certain extent, to be attributed to the one living at liberty to pursue only their own inclinations, while so large a proportion of the other are constrained by their perpetual servitude; but it is probable that it partly arises also from the difference of the natural temper and disposition of the two people. Cheerful-

ness and gaiety, with impatience of the steady pursuit of agriculture, distinguish alike the free and bond peasant of the Sclavonic race, while the Tcherameese of every grade are remarkable for their steady habits, and appear wedded to the soil which they cultivate.

The Russian villages are ever found in the bare plains, without a tree to shade them, or an elevation of the ground to break the uniformity which prevails, while the Tcherameese have chosen spots amidst the varied scenery and picturesque beauty of hill and dale and forest land, and have constructed their dwellings in the sheltered vales or upon the sides of the hills, and improved the natural scenery around them in a manner which is gratifying to behold. This village and its vicinity, presented the most agreeable scenery of any I had hitherto seen in Russia. The houses were placed without order, as regarded any streets or thoroughfares between them, but were nicely disposed amidst the rich verdure of groves of the lime, the oak, and the birch tree, and they did not fail to excite our liveliest interest.

After entering the village, we turned suddenly into the court of a spacious house, where our *yemstchick*, or driver, informed us we should be best able to deal for our horses. As we drew up here, several good men came out from the rooms which were around the court dressed in perfect tunics of white cotton and pantaloons or leggings similar to those worn by the aborigines of the forests of North America, and with mocassins on their feet made of strips of dried leaves, such as those of which we make our mats. They spoke the Russian language, but, as it appeared, very imperfectly. They addressed us, however, without making any inquiries of the *yemstchick*, demanding what were our wants; and, with the same breath, without waiting for a reply, they invited us to walk in and breakfast with them, to which we very readily consented.

We found the table, upon entering their apartment, already laid, and we sat down, in company with the father of the family and two young men who were his sons, to several dishes of meat, and "sterlit" fresh from the Volga. We had as much conversation with them as our time and our limited means of intercourse permitted; and they appeared to us to be intelligent, and very desirous of acquiring useful knowledge. If they are temperate in their habits, when placed in comparison with their fellow-subjects of the predominant race, they are a little less so when compared with the Moslems. Their strongest drink, however, is beer. They cultivate the hop, though some specimens we saw of that plant were indifferent and stunted. They appeared to be more successful, however, in their management of bees, if we might judge from some very good honey which composed a portion of this meal. But of their beer, of which we also drank, we did not think favourably.

Whatever may have been the migrations of the Finns, the Eastern origin of the Tcherameese is too deeply engraven on the features of their face, which as much resemble those of the Chinese as they do those of the Tatars, especially the eyes, to be mistaken for Caucasian.

Our good hosts here appeared a loyal people, and full of respect for the institutions under which they lived, without any such prejudices as we might expect to find among them, towards their brethren of the Sclavonic race. When we had finished our repast, and the chiboock that had been offered us, of which we took but as many puffs as we thought would save giving offence, we requested that, while the horses were preparing, we might be allowed to take a hasty survey of their premises, to which they consented, and we returned to the court for that purpose.

The style of the house, with its broad court, as we now more particularly perceived, was quite Eastern, and presented, perhaps a fine specimen of the taste which anciently prevailed, but which is now gone to decay, among this people. The gate of the court was adorned with laboriously carved ornamental work, but was not painted; and, here and there, the corners of the buildings around the court, like the frieze of a temple in ruins, disclosed the degree of art which must have been attained by those by whom the work was performed. Their farming establishment, and their agricultural implements, we did not find equal the expectations that the appearance of the village and its vicinity had excited.

While we were examining some implements that lay strewed about the yard, several young women came into the court from a room opposite to that in which we had breakfasted, apparently prepared for the labours of the field. Acquainted years before with the customs of the Eastern nations in the seclusion of their women, I was not a little surprised to find these fair Tcherameese without any appearance of restraint. They approached us smiling, and, when spoken to, stood before us with their faces unveiled. Not one of them spoke the Russian language. Nevertheless, my companion contrived, by the aid of the men, to draw them into conversation. Their dress was precisely the same as that of the men, and their ornaments also, save four six-copek silver pieces which hung from the ears of the greater part of them. Their forms were delicate, and by no means indicated the subjection of their sex to constant labour in the open fields. Three out of six or seven of those we saw, however, were mere girls, and one of these had a sly, arch look, and seemed to us possessed of great beauty. In fact, we found their company so agreeable, that we endeavoured to make ourselves as

acceptable to them as we could in return, and we could not help flattering ourselves that we were successful.

But while we were enjoying this agreeable intercourse, we were suddenly summoned by the men to re-enter their apartment, to take more coffee and finish our chiboock. Whether this was a ruse to curtail the period of our gratification in the little interchange of thought and sentiment which we were able to carry on with their women, we could not judge, until we put some questions to the men while over our coffee, when we seemed to discover that we had at least bordered upon the limits set by Tcherameese ideas of delicacy to the intercourse of strangers with their women.

After sipping and puffing away another short quarter of an hour, we remounted our *tarantass*, and continued our journey, well satisfied with our first acquaintance with both the men and women of the Tcherameese race; and we thought we should be fortunate if we had any more such encounters during our passage through their territory.

As we advanced we found the country, though but indifferently cultivated, teeming with the same abundance as that which we had observed from the beginning, and presenting an agreeable aspect, with slight undulations, and some fine groves, which aided to vary the scene, and sometimes concealed the unsightly rows of the formal birch trees by which the road was still lined on both sides.

These tiresome lines of trees before noticed, whatever may have been the cause of their plantation, and whatever may be their effect to the eye, are however of great use at three out of the four seasons of the year. In summer, if the sun is on either side, the horses are constantly shaded. But when it is otherwise, where the road, as is often the case, makes a zig-zag course, the horses may, by changing sides at every angle, be

kept at all hours out of the sunshine; and so accustomed are they to profit by this advantage, where it may be obtained, that they require no guiding to find the shade. In winter, the trees cause the snow to accumulate, and form the sounder and more solid road. And in the spring, by the shade they afford, they keep the sledge-ways from breaking up before the sun has power enough to dry up the mud which succeeds the snow.

Soon after noon we reached the small district Tcherameese town of Tschébocksary. We found the good people with whom we dealt here for our horses as obliging and hospitable as our friends of the morning; and we dined with them upon fresh sterlit, of which no taste can tire, and an excellent dish of stchée; but we had not the pleasure of making the acquaintance of any of their women.

The room in which we dined here, which was particularly clean and neat, was adorned with portraits of the emperor and the empress by some village artist. That of the emperor was uncovered; but that of the empress, because, as they informed us, it hung in the apartment of the men, was veiled in gauze, in accordance with the still prevailing ideas of strict delicacy among these people. When we noticed the portraits, however, they did not hesitate to remove the gauze that covered that of the empress: and they were much delighted when I informed them that I had very lately seen both their majesties; and they inquired of me, with much interest, concerning the resemblance of the pictures to the originals. Both were, however, represented in the flower of youth; so that there was plenty of scope for accounting for the copies not being exactly like the originals as I saw them, without putting the good Tcherameese out of conceit with the cherished ornaments of their room, or injuring the reputation of the

village artist, who, as our host informed us, was living among them.

We had here a better opportunity than we had before had, of examining the implements of agriculture in use among these people; and we found them extremely rude. It might be almost said, of all we saw, that the cart-wheel alone indicated any application of the mechanical arts to the most important of all the labours of man. But this deficiency in the application of art, in the rural affairs of the country, is not peculiar to the villages of this race. Nothing, indeed, is more wanted in Russia than the improvement of agricultural implements generally. What can the Russian authorities or landlords everywhere be about, that they do not discover, or do not supply, this deficiency? Or do they wait till the sovereign issues an ukase to regulate the industry of the husbandman, by the just application of the arts to his various labours, which indeed would, in a few years, incalculably augment the wealth and strength of the empire? Could the possessors of the soil with its millions of stout and intelligent peasantry, throughout the land, catch but a spark of the agricultural enthusiasm of the more politic portion of our country gentlemen, it is impossible that they should fail of receiving the countenance of the government, and they would assuredly confer greater benefit upon their country than they yet have dreamed of. They have not, in any of their rural districts, the dull and unintelligent boor to deal with, who in many parts of Europe sets at nought every effort to raise his condition, and advance the interests of the country. Every where in Russia, the stranger, with all he can bring tending to advance the knowledge of the arts with which the people are acquainted, or to introduce any that are new to them, is cherished alike by all, except, indeed, such of the owners of the soil

as prefer the round of fashion in the capital cities of the empire, to the nobler pursuits that demand the residence, and an active life, on the part of the landlord among his tenantry.

I tried, while we were with these Tcherameese, through the aid of the merchant, who had a very slight acquaintance with rural affairs, to put into their heads some ideas that were certainly new to them. They showed great desire to profit by every hint they received, and the attention with which they listened to us, seemed proof enough of their ripeness for the adoption of every improvement that might be introduced into their system.

What we chiefly tried to impress was, the necessity, above all things, of the introduction of a better plough than that which they yet possessed; and I drew for them the form of one of the more simple description of those in use in England. But as they had no idea of putting iron to such uses as the share and the coulter are made to perform in a better system of husbandry, I fear they received as little benefit from this mode of instruction as from what was told them. I promised them, however, if they would make the essay, and do what they could with the best plough they could make, after the hints now given them, that, should I again pass through their country, about which there was some uncertainty, and find an improved plough in operation, I would certainly report this instance of their ability and true patriotism, if not to the original of one of the portraits we had just been admiring, at least to some one at the capital, or even at the court of their sovereign, that would probably take some steps to make their rude specimen of the important implement properly available. After this, we took leave of our second acquaintances among the Tcherameese with the same agreeable feelings with which we had left the first.

We had slept but little upon the night before that upon which we were now entering, and the state of the roads over which we had passed during the day, gave us no expectation of enjoying much rest during the hours that it was now almost necessary for us to repose. Those who have travelled over the worst roads in Western Europe, might still form but a faint idea of those which we found in this part of Russia. Sometimes they were torn up by the floods of rain, which had formed crooked and deep ruts for the passage of the water down the declivities on both sides of the narrow ravines that break the even surface of the plain, while the bridges over the ravines were constructed of mere logs or poles, laid across timber frames.

But the worst of the inconveniences arose from the deep ruts which were every where, on either side the bridges, formed by the water in finding its way into the stream beneath, and from the necessity of galloping down the declivities, to force the carriage upon the bridges, and, if possible, as is the constant Russian practice, to give it sufficient impetus to aid the horses in their efforts to mount the opposite ascent. Sometimes these ruts were so deep that large logs had been placed across them to prevent the carriage being brought to a stand, which, nevertheless, occurred more than once during the journey, when we were obliged to dismount, and literally put our shoulders to the wheel. And often our carriage fell with such force against the bridges, that it was unsafe to retain our accustomed reclining position, although we were seated upon mattresses laid upon a bed of straw. At one time, my fellow-traveller was so bruised in the back, as to be under the apprehension that he had received a permanent injury. We arrived, however, upon the morning of the fifth day of our journey, at the last Tcherameese village, without any other injury than that which proceeded from

want of rest. But, much as we were fatigued, we made no longer stay here than was necessary to refresh ourselves by a hasty meal.

Soon after again renewing our journey, we entered upon a sandy plain, for the passage across which we had provided ourselves with six horses, which were all placed abreast. Although this plain is inundated in the spring, the sand with which it is covered was now so loose and deep that our accustomed quick rate of driving was impossible; and such was the relief we found after the violent shocks we had experienced during the night, that we rejoiced in the very obstruction that impeded our progress, as it afforded us the opportunity of taking the repose we so much needed; and we had not proceeded far upon this plain before we both fell into a sound sleep.

Our repose, however, in less than an hour, was, as we thought, wantonly broken by a Russian officer whom we met travelling in a carriage similar to our own, and with the same number of horses. The officer, whether induced by curiosity, charity, or the common sympathy of travellers for one another, had ordered our *yemstchik* to stop; and upon being obeyed, after inquiring who was in the vehicle, and hearing that there were two foreigners, who were sound asleep, he had directed that we should be awakened, under the impression, as we thought afterwards, that we were shamming asleep to avoid observation.

When we were well awake, we had a few words of conversation with the disturber of our repose, which, doubtless, at least negatived any wrong impression he might have had concerning us; after which the two parties continued their journeys.

We now found ourselves in the midst of the wide plain, and passing by the town of Sviajsk, which is situated upon the table summit of a hill, as remarkable

as an oasis in the desert, and elevated far above the height to which the waters rise during the inundations of the Volga. Sviajsk is a walled town, of which the citadel and the convent are the most conspicuous objects. Our *yemstchik* here took advantage of the declivity of the hill upon which the town stands, to carry us over a portion of solid ground, which was some relief to our horses; but as we were not to change here, we halted but for a moment at the gate of the town, through which we perceived a straight street, in which neither man nor horse, nor anything in motion, was to be seen to relieve the gloom and solitude which seemed to reign within. After this, our delighted *yemstchik* was able to put his willing horses at full speed down the declivity, until we again encountered the sand.

An hour or two after this, we arrived at the ferry of the mighty Volga. There was nothing here but a few huts, occupied by those who kept the passage boat, which was now upon the opposite side of the river. After we had alighted, we had great difficulty in getting the horses and carriage across a deep bed of sand, which lay between the morsel of solid ground upon which the houses stood, and a little jetty which ran into the stream.

While we were waiting for the boat, and our *yemstchik* was preparing the vehicle and the horses for the passage, we were addressed by a pope, or secular priest, who came out of one of the huts, for the purpose of asking alms. As he was the first of his order, and indeed of any order, that I at least had seen in this humiliating condition in Russia, he excited my surprise, and I was anxious to know the cause of the situation in which he seemed to be. Those who have seen much of Italy, know well the character and the influence upon society of even the secular beggar of the clerical order, without reference to the lives and example of the idle and profligate mendicants of the convents; but on ac-

count of the novelty of the circumstance here, we were both unwilling to pass it by without at least making inquiries concerning the causes of it. But, before we asked any direct question, we reminded the pope that he was precisely in that position, as it appeared to us, which subjected him to transportation beyond the mountains that separate Russia from the penal settlement of Siberia. But we did the good man great wrong, as we soon discovered. At first, upon our remonstrance, he appeared much confused; but, afterwards he evinced great anxiety to exculpate himself from the dishonour which our allusion to the consequences to which he appeared to be subjected, seemed to throw upon him; and he expressed himself willing to satisfy us of the legality as well as necessity of the position he assumed.

This pope now informed us, that he resided even as far from where we found him as the vicinity of Moscow, and that he was upon a pilgrimage to Kazan, which he had undertaken on account of the following circumstances of his life past and present. He said he had married at the early age necessary to the priests in Russia, and that his wife and one of two children that she brought him, had died of the cholera the last time it ravaged Russia. The child, he said, that remained to him, was a girl; and, such was his anxiety for her life, that upon the first news of the approach of the cholera, which was now raging in the south of Russia, he had conceived the idea of making a pilgrimage bare-foot to one of the convents of Kazan, where there was an especially holy picture of the Virgin, in the hope of obtaining the intercession of the Queen of Heaven for the security of his child against the rapidly advancing pestilence. He had, however, already suffered so much from wounded feet, that although now only a few hours' journey from Kazan, he had been obliged to remain here until he had exhausted the stock

of necessaries which he brought from the last convent, and had thus become under the necessity of soliciting our aid.

As there could be no doubt whatever of the truth of the pope's story, we did not hesitate to offer him some money. But this he refused, requesting us to give him rather a little meat or bread, if we had any. Nevertheless, upon our informing him that we carried no provisions with us, since we found such abundance everywhere, he accepted just as much money as would enable him to lay in stock enough, by purchasing of the ferrymen, to carry him to Kazan.

After this pious pilgrim had thanked us very warmly, he promised to intercede with Heaven for our safety during the arduous journey which we had undertaken to accomplish. We did not, however, leave the good pope in this condition, before we had made an attempt to impress upon him our own opinion, that if he would finish his journey in our carriage, in which there was abundance of room, the Virgin would receive his petition, as favourably as if he made the rest of his journey upon his wounded feet. He did not, indeed, appear shocked at our proposition; but, after thanking us for the offer, he said that the prosecution of his intentions was doubly obligatory, since it was commenced; and that any turning aside from his purpose now, might rather subject him to the censure, if not the vengeance, of the Virgin, than tend to obtain her intercession in his behalf. It was impossible not to respect his reasoning, and therein approve his resolution.

After we had been nearly an hour detained, the boat for which we had been waiting returned, and we embarked, with our six horses and carriage, and with the blessing of the good pope, for the opposite shore.

The Volga is here about a mile in breadth, and is very rapid in its course; and we were more than two

hours in passing it, owing to its being necessary to row a mile up the stream before the boat may with advantage encounter the full force of the current of the great river.

The weather was fine, and the temperature of the atmosphere was high, while we were on the water; but the natural scenery on both sides of the river was desolate, and a very little relieved by the spare appearance of the works of men in the cultivation of the soil, or by the dwellings of inhabitants along the river's banks. Upon the bosom of the waters one object alone beyond the rail of our own bark, broke the solitude and silence of the ever-flowing stream. A large vessel, on her inland voyage from the Caspian Sea to the active seat of commerce we had so lately visited, was slowly stemming the current under one enormous square sail, and with the wind immediately at her stern.

Upon landing, we took some refreshment while the carriage was preparing, after which we continued our journey.

Our road was still across a plain, like that over which we had passed upon the opposite side of the river, with but little intermission of sand or rude sterility, until we came within sight of Kazan a little before sunset, at the distance of three or four versts.

The ancient city, once the capital of the Tatars, by whom it was constructed, stands upon the first rising ground of the slightly elevated country which marks the bounds of the lower lands which border the Volga, and affords a highly agreeable and picturesque object to contemplate as the traveller approaches it by the side of the plain. Its ancient Kremlin, with its Tatar towers and its gilded Christian spires still mingled with the minaret of the Moslem temples of worship, is seen rising above its white walls, and forming altogether an object of moral interest far above that which proceeds from the immediate external beauty which it exhibits.

Immediately before reaching the town, we passed a large pyramidal monument, which will demand a further notice, in company with what is most remarkable within the walls of this ancient city.

Upon our reaching the upper part of the town, we drove directly into the court of a caravansary, or large hotel, which is the general rendezvous of the merchants passing east and west of Kazan during their sojourn in this city.

This caravansary of Kazan was full of life when we entered it, and of interest from the character of the scenes which it presented. Both the court and the building were spacious, and arranged with a considerable degree of order. On one side, were refreshment rooms for the conductors of the waggons of the merchants, and the apartments of the family by whom the resting-place was kept, all upon the ground floor, and a respectable *restauration*, as the Russians call a public dining-house, after the German corruption of the French term, upon the floor above; and throughout the rest of the court were lines of store-rooms upon the ground floor for the goods *in transitu*, and, above these, all the sleeping chambers for the travellers.

At the moment we arrived, some parties from the countries far east of us were unloading their waggons to store their goods, in order to afford repose to their horses before attempting the passage of the sandy plains over which we had just passed, and others from the west were making the same preparation for a night's rest after the fatigues of the same journey that we had just accomplished. Busy Tatars and Kirguise from beyond the Ural Mountains, were mingled with Russians, all clad in their various costumes of the Tatar tunic and the Kirguise and Russian sheep-skins; while here and there stood a straight figure in the dignified caftan, puffing the chiboock, or giving direc-

tions to the parties occupied with the disposition of the various objects of merchandise which were spread about the court.

My companion, as it has been mentioned, had despatched several waggons from Nijhni Novgorod, loaded with the merchandise with which he was about to commence his speculations in Siberia, under orders to await our arrival here; and he had been during the journey, under some alarm concerning the safety of his property. The waggons might have broken down where they could not be easily repaired; robbers might have plundered them; the men to whose care they were entrusted, notwithstanding the security of the passport, of which I confess I now saw the use for the first time, might have deserted him. But after these gloomy forebodings, he now found all his wares under the safe keeping of locks and iron bars, and his men only waiting the arrangements to replace the horses they had brought thus far, in order to continue their journey.

As we proposed to stay a few days at Kazan, we now chose our chambers, which, though the best that were to be had, were small, and had nothing within their bare walls save contrivances for bedsteads, consisting of some planks laid upon cross-sticks. Nevertheless, we were thankful for any quarters where we could sleep again in stillness; and we had our own beds transported to our rooms, and retired at an early hour, in the good hope of enjoying a night's undisturbed repose.

## CHAP. X.

### KAZAN.

Character.— Population.—Importance.—Arts.—Manufactures.—Divisions of the Town.—Tatars.—Russians.—Illness of the Travellers.—German Baron.—English Student.—A German Professor.—A Danish Architect.—Alarm of the Citizens at the Approach of the Cholera.

KAZAN, which was for several centuries the capital city of the Tatars throughout their possessions in Russia, was still retained by these semi-barbarians until 1552, when it was finally subdued by Ivan IV. It is now an important city of the Russian empire, with a population of about 45,000 inhabitants, nearly one-third of whom are Tatars, who are living tranquilly under the tolerant sway of the Russian Government. It stands, as we have seen in our approach to the city, upon the ground immediately raised above the lower plain of the Volga, and about six or seven versts from the banks of that river. It is the seat of the government of the department of the same name, and of an archbishopric, and also of one of the four principal universities of the empire. It is rather known, indeed, at the present day as a seat of literature and science, than as a military post. It has an observatory, a botanical garden, a museum of natural history, and a public library, besides two gymnasiums, a school for the instruction of youths intended for the church, two other public schools, and also a military school.

Kazan is also the seat of several manufactures, which

are esteemed throughout Russia. It is famous, in particular, for its soap, of which we saw great quantities at Nijhni Novgorod, and scarcely less so for its cotton and woollen stuffs, and for its hardware and earthenware, and gunpowder. It has also, both a Russian and a Tatar printing-office, which are chiefly employed in the production of books for religious instruction, according to the faith of the two races that divide the town, and all of which, as I was assured, were studiously kept free from controversy.

But though the Tatars and Russians live here in the best possible fellowship, and though, politically and commercially speaking, there exist no differences or jealousies between them, their difference in character, manners, and religion, has naturally placed them apart from each other in the quarters of the town which they severally inhabit. Thus this celebrated city has become, both physically and morally, divided into two parts. The upper part is on a level with the Kremlin, and is almost exclusively inhabited by the Russians, and contains all the public edifices and churches. It is, like all Russian towns, laid out with remarkable regularity, and it has several new streets, now forming, of elegant houses constructed of stone; and at this time an extensive new building was erecting to replace its *Gostinnoi Dvor*, or bazaar, which had been lately destroyed by fire. There are no less, also, than forty churches in this part of the town, including those belonging to eight convents. It has also a market abundantly supplied with the ordinary articles of consumption from a fertile and well-cultivated district around the city, as well as with fish from the Volga.

The lower town is almost exclusively inhabited by the Tatars, who have eight mosques. This quarter is less grand or elegant, though more picturesque, or more novel to the eye of a stranger from Western

Europe, than the upper town, as we shall presently have an opportunity of observing

The church, which is the most esteemed in Kazan, is that of the *Karsianskaya Royeniater*, or Holy Church of the Virgin of Kazan, which is one of the most venerated of all the Christian temples throughout Russia, on account of its having formerly contained that holy picture of the Virgin which now sanctifies the Cathedral of Kazan at St. Petersburg.

The hopes which the travellers had had of a comfortable night's rest upon arriving at Kazan were sadly disappointed. We both, indeed, passed a restless night; and my companion was feverish and decidedly unwell in the morning. But as we were equally anxious to set about our particular occupations—the merchant to make his arrangements for the despatch of his waggons, and myself to visit the chief objects of interest in the town—we had both risen and taken our coffee at an early hour, and were now engaged in my apartment in settling our plans, when the landlord of the hotel came to bring us some welcome news, as he deemed it must needs be, in informing us, that there was an Englishman, a professor in the university here, residing in the town.

My intention had previously been, to wait as soon as possible upon the governor, but on receiving this information I determined to call first upon the professor; and as my companion had some letters of introduction to present to merchants residing, as we heard, in the same quarter of the town as my countryman, we set out together to make our several visits.

After passing some gardens, with beds of trained shrubs and avenues of large trees, we came to an entirely new and evidently growing portion of the town, where we found the house in which the Englishman dwelt. It was, as most dwellings are wont to be in Russian towns, very large; and we were directed by

some women, who appeared to inhabit the lower rooms, to ascend to the first floor to find my countryman's apartments. Arrived here, we found the door of a large room standing half open; and, as there appeared to be no bell, and no one answered when we tapped, we supposed that there must be a suite of rooms, and we walked directly into that which appeared to be the first of them; and, after waiting here a little while and seeing nobody, we passed into another apartment, of which we perceived the door also partly open, after giving the same notice of our intention as before. While we were in this second room, however, the door of a third opened, and a gentleman in a morning gown made his appearance, and, with too much politeness to wait for any question, bade us be seated, and in such good English as to leave no doubt upon my mind that we had met the professor; and I began to speak with him of general matters without even making the inquiry. We had not, however, long conversed after the first compliments were passed, before I perceived by a slight German accent in some particular words which our new acquaintance used, either that I must be in error regarding the person, or that the landlord of the caravansary, not perhaps being very well acquainted with the geographical and philological divisions of Western Europe, had mistaken a German for an Englishman; and, upon my asking the question, my doubts were immediately set at rest by the gentleman presenting his card, when we perceived that we were conversing with a German Baron. We learned, however, from the Baron, that we had not, nevertheless, been misdirected, and that the Englishman of whom we were in search occupied a part of this same suite of apartments, but that he was not then within.

After this interview with the polite German, we returned to our hotel, but not to follow up the plans

we had severally laid down; for towards the middle of the day, when the heat was excessive, we found our restless night had been but the forerunner, in both our cases, of decided fever.

We were not at first aware, though we soon afterwards learned, that we were, however, only in the ordinary condition of travellers in the interior of Russia, who rarely escape an attack of fever commencing between the fourth and tenth day of their journey, and which usually endures from three to ten, but sometimes for twenty days, yet is rarely attended with fatal consequences. Even the *feld-jägers*, which are the Government couriers between the distant parts of the empire, who make the longest journeys in an incredibly short space of time, and who are, moreover, men chosen for their strength of constitution and hardihood, and to whom travelling is the sole occupation of their lives, seldom escape this visitation, and are even often attacked as early as the third day of their journey. It was not wonderful, therefore, that we should experience the common fate of Russian travellers. My companion's case was much the worst of the two, both in regard to our sickness and our position. I was able to lie down immediately, while the pressing nature of the merchant's affairs induced him to pass the day among his waggons of goods, which he was anxious to despatch, until the evening brought with it a degree of fever which obliged him to take to his bed in earnest, without a hope of rising for several days.

The second day after our arrival, the Englishman of whom we had been in search on the previous morning paid me a visit. I had arisen with some of the fever of the previous day remaining, and upon finding my fellow-traveller unable to leave his bed, and as nothing required my attention, I had placed myself upon my bed again, when my countryman made his appearance.

The Englishman did not enter, as most foreigners are wont, without knocking and receiving an invitation so to do; but I had no sooner replied to his notice, that the door of my room opened, and for the professor that I had painted in my mind, with the spirit of man expressed in visible lines of thought upon his forehead, in marched a student, as he early informed me, of the Oriental tongues, with the air of a dandy, and seemingly of about two-and-twenty years of age.

I was, at the moment my countryman entered the room, sitting upon my bed, supported by a pillow at my back, with a bear-skin about my shoulders to keep off the draughts of wind that passed between the door and the window, and with a fur cap upon my head. The dandy was dressed, though not in the newest, yet in the once highest fashion of the *petit maître* of the *Champs Elysées*. His stature was low, but very erect; and as soon as he had reached half-way between the door, which the servant that had brought him to my room was in the act of closing, and my bed-side, he stopped, raised his head as high as he could stretch it, and, placing the gilded top of a cane which he held in his hands under his chin, asked me whether I was the Englishman that had called upon him the day before. To this I replied, that if he were living with the German Baron, whose name I at the same time mentioned, I had yesterday waited upon him, and had been disappointed in not seeing him before I was attacked by the fever, under which I was now suffering. "I have come then," said the student, "to inquire what business you may chance to have with me." "As to business," I replied, "I have in effect none. I did myself the pleasure of calling upon you, merely under the impression that, at this distance from England, any little intercourse between us would have been mutually advantageous or agreeable." "Why," then said the

young man, "it might have been so; but I have not much leisure apart from my studies, and I am so frequently at the governor's, where I dine to-day, that I have not much time to engage in the ordinary topics of conversation." "I must then," I replied to this, "be much indebted to you for this visit."

This short colloquy was nearly all that passed between two native Englishmen, of whom there were none other in the town—one of them at the place of his abode, and the other a stranger wrapped in the skins of beasts, and stretched upon a feverish bed.

The last speech, indeed, of the young man was not likely to provoke more than the formal reply which I gave to it. After this, the student of Oriental languages paced the room for a few minutes with the air of a midshipman left alone upon the quarter-deck of a ship of war at her moorings. Then after pulling out his watch, he started and said, "The governor is by this time expecting me. I generally see his excellency at this hour in the morning. I must take my leave." And I must say, I have seldom myself pronounced good-bye! in answer to good-bye! with more pleasure than on the present occasion.

On the third day of our sojourn at Kazan, the merchant was still in bed with increased fever; but my own condition was now sufficiently improved to allow me to perform the part of nurse to my fellow-traveller. At intervals, too, I thought myself well enough to walk in the gardens already mentioned, which were within a hundred yards of our quarters.

During my promenade, I did not meet a single living creature; and there was nothing to contemplate here, save some lines of tall trees, and some badly laid out shrubberies, where the once-trained luxuriance of nature had been left to fall into neglect. There was hardly, therefore, sufficient to relieve the

*ennui* of one not wholly free from fever, and confined during the greater part of the day to the sick room of another.

The fourth day brought an unexpected change, and reversed the condition of the travellers. After a restless night, I found myself in so high a fever as to render it imprudent to rise, while my companion had so much improved, as to act now the part for me that I had been able to perform for him upon the previous day, as well as to attend to his affairs, and happily to despatch his waggons, which had been waiting for the completion of the necessary arrangements for the journey.

The next day, however, once more reversed the condition of the sick men; and I was now better than I had been since the day of our arrival, while my friend was so alarmingly ill as to induce me to insist upon his seeing a medical man, which had not before been thought of by either of us.

The fever, in both our cases, was in fact intermittent; and we passed thirteen days at Kazan in this miserable condition, from the effects of the roads over which we had previously passed, before we were both sufficiently well to continue our journey. And, during all this time, I was occupied but a single day in the examination of the remarkable monuments of the town. I was not even able to pay the proper compliment of calling upon the governor, which I regretted the more, from the estimation in which we heard that his excellency was held.

Two gentlemen, however, whom I have not yet mentioned, came during our helpless condition to visit us; and from them we heard, that every one was alarmed at this moment at the appearance of any disease, on account of the rather delicate state of the public nerves from the known approach of the cholera, which had already arrived at the point at which the Don and the

Volga make the nearest approaches to each other, in its destructive course towards the great Russian cities.

To one of these gentlemen, who was a German, and a professor of English and German literature at the University of Kazan, I was indebted for one or two visits at moments snatched from his leisure hours, and for such information as I shall make use of in putting down a few remarks concerning this ancient Tatar capital; and, to the other, who was a native of Denmark, and an architect, I was indebted for civilities in the character of *cicerone* for the single day that I was able to spend in the inspection of the town.

## CHAP. XI.

### KAZAN.

Monuments.—Pyramidal Mausoleum.—Streets.—Tatar Quart
—Mosque.—Mussulman Worship.—Tower.—Statue of t
Russian Poet Derscharvinse.—Preparations for Departure.-
Opinion concerning the Cause of the Cholera.

Upon the morning of the day on which I though myself sufficiently well to accept the offer of th Danish gentleman to act as my guide in exploring th town, I sent a note, at an early hour, to report my better condition to my obliging friend, who in a few minutes' time drove into the caravansary with a handsome droshky, drawn by a pair of beautiful cream-coloured ponies, which it may be mentioned, in passing, were of the value, in this part of Russia, of 18*l.* sterling each.

We first drove out of the town, to visit the monument already mentioned as attracting the first attention of the traveller arriving in the vicinity of this city from the opposite side of the Volga. The weather was now as brilliant as it had been upon the preceding days; but the wind in the plain, at the early hour at which we drove across it, was chilly; and I was obliged to avail myself of the winter wrappings which were in the droshky, and without which no carriage, at any season, leaves the streets of a town in this part of the country.

The monument is about three versts from the town. It consists, as already said, of a pyramidal building, though not constructed exactly after the plan of those

om which the name of this form of mausoleum is erived. It terminates in a flat summit about a fifth r sixth of its height from the point at which the angles ould have met to form its apex, had it been in the gure of a perfect pyramid. The character of the uilding, indeed, is further varied from that of the true yramid by four elegant porticos, with sculptured de-ices over them, apparently representing scorpions, and eneath every one of which there are three doors. The onument was erected only about twenty-five years go, to commemorate the victory of Ivan IV. over the Tatars, and the final triumph of the Russians over heir ancient enemies, which followed the fall of Kazan. It is surrounded with iron rails with stone supports, and its pyramidal portion rests upon a solid base of stone, which is ascended by steps at its four sides. We entered it by a door beneath one of the porticos, which conducted us to a small chapel, which we found very plainly and appropriately decorated. From this we descended to the depository of the mouldering remains of the heroes departed, which had been removed from another tomb, formed of wood, when this was erected. This was a mere charnel-house, in which tons of the remains of mortality were thrown into heaps, and left uncovered with earth. In the midst of these, there was a sarcophagus containing many remains of that more enduring part of our bodily substance which "some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house;" all of which were doubtless better left to perish with the rest, since it is the supreme will that they should return some day to dust, and since we may hope that those that are gone are well rid of all that encumbered them in their mortality.

If we were to reflect upon the consequences of the more or less prevalent practice almost every where, of preserving the remains of the dead, how many gross

superstitions that have existed in the world, might we not trace to this error of men, in refusing to accept the plain evidence of the senses concerning the separation of the spiritual from the material portion of us, as the beginning of a state of existence in which we shall have no need of material substance, or at least, of such as that with which we are here clothed, either for our identity or for our enjoyments. Were it not better then, wholly to disconnect our thoughts of the future from the perishable portion of the spirit's first habitation?

After this little inspection of the monument in the plain, we drove back to the town, where we first visited the Tatar quarter, for the purpose especially of inspecting a new mosque which had been just completed by my worthy guide himself. The new temple of Mahommedan worship stands near the centre of this portion of the town, which, as before mentioned, is almost exclusively inhabited by the Moslems, who, whatever may be their theological errors, are existing evidences of the moral tone of which their race is susceptible when under equal laws, and, at the same time, of the temper of the Russian people, and of the wisdom and sense of moral right, which has, since the cessation of religious wars in the north of Europe, so eminently distinguished the rulers as well as the masses of the Sclavonian race.

The streets, as we drove slowly through this quarter, presented little that was worthy of remark, apart from the style of the buildings, which, as might be expected, partakes about equally of the bold and open character of that of all Russian edifices, and the close and confined style, with the neglect of exterior ornament, which the terror of tempting the avarice of the powerful, with an especial tenderness for, or jealousy of, the women, has in Eastern countries made almost universal. The

houses, too, are almost all low; and those which partake most of the Eastern character have in general close courts. Being, moreover, all built of wood, and ill-painted, or not painted at all, they have, for the most part, a slovenly, and, in the lesser streets, even a dirty appearance. And add to this, that, as much less care has been bestowed upon the carriage portion of the streets here, than upon that of the streets of the upper town, the quarter has this additional disadvantage.

The living scenes in the streets here appeared dull to a Western European. In the road-way, we saw but a few small and rough carts, drawn by ill-fed horses. Upon the wooden *trottoirs* sat groups of the Moslems puffing their chiboocks; and a few children, ill-clad, were playing about the doors. The greater part of the men saluted us as we passed, by putting their right hands to their breasts or foreheads, after the graceful Eastern manner; and several, whom my Danish friend informed me, had aided the construction of the mosque by their money or their labour, arose, and completed the salaam of Moslem to Moslem, by accompanying the action of the hand with words signifying, "God be with you."

The paucity of the numbers of women to be seen in the streets of all properly Mussulman towns, is not so remarkable in this quarter of Kazan; and the traveller misses their absence the less here, since the Russians themselves, if we except those of the Northern capital, and some of other towns where the native manners are thought most corrupted by foreign intercourse, are not without what we should consider a peculiar sense of delicacy regarding the exposure of their women to the gaze of strangers. Some of the fair Tatars, of almost all ages, we here saw in the streets; and they were assuredly not all either devoid of a certain consciousness of their charms, or of a sense of the right of foreigners

to admire them. One or two, with the prettiest coquetry in the world, as we passed slowly by, let fall the flimsy veils which covered but half their faces, and certainly exhibited, with their bright brown skins, such jet black and brilliant eyes, as might endanger the peace of a whole city, were they permitted to sparkle at a Christian *soirée*.

When we came in sight of the new mosque, a short colloquy took place between its builder and myself, which arose from some remarks that my friend thought it necessary to make, on account of what he had heard of the religious character of the English people generally; and what passed between us I feel bound to report.

"There is a little ceremony required, on the part of a Christian and Mussulman alike, upon entering a Moslem temple of worship," said the worthy Dane, "which possibly may not be agreeable to you to comply with; and this," he added, "is more especially necessary at this moment, as I perceive by the boy upon the minaret, who serves the place of the bell in the tower of the Christian church, that it is already the hour of prayer.—It is necessary that we should remove our shoes from off our feet before entering the building."

Now it has happened to be my fate to visit people professing many of the religions of the world; and, notwithstanding the mere absurdities with which some of these abound, they have all seemed to me, in proportion to their degrees of refinement, through a clearer or darker medium, as well in the exultations of the untutored Indian, "who sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind," as with the most refined societies of Christian men, essentially to teach the duties of man both to his Creator and to his fellow-man. Thus I have learned to respect the sincere worship of every people, and to consider every temple, whether it be the humble wigwam beside the lofty pine, or the grass hut

under the shade of the palm, or the magnificent edifice of a Christian or Mahommedan metropolis, equally dedicated to the common Creator, who has not enlightened all men alike. I therefore informed my considerate guide, that I could conscientiously, and would very willingly, conform to this usage, and, indeed, that I had often before conformed to the usages of the Mussulmans, who really derive their system, however corrupt the channel through which it may have passed, from the same sources as the more civilised nations derive all the religious knowledge they in effect possess.

When we drew up at the step which led to the entrance of the new Moslem temple, we found several of the worshippers of Allah sitting upon the landing of the steps, and one or two standing upon the pathway before the front of the mosque. Those who were above, I subsequently heard, were some who, under a certain consciousness of error, deemed themselves unworthy to enter the sacred edifice; and they remained seated, and apparently engaged in contemplation or prayer, while those who were below came and aided us to alight from our carriage, and seemed pleased to see the builder of their temple.

Upon ascending the steps, we found them strewed with shoes; and after removing our own, we entered the mosque.

Every one knows the character of the interior as well as the exterior of a Moslem temple of worship, from the simpler of which, this presented no variation. A carpet, which entirely covered the floor, and a reading-desk, were its only articles of furniture; and there was not within its walls a symbol of spiritual or material Being in any form whatsoever. The architecture of the building, as well within as without, was in chaste keeping with the Mussulman idea of the unity of the Deity, and, indeed, seemed to me a specimen in style,

that would be likely to suit the chastening taste of the present age among ourselves. Not an audible word was uttered within the edifice while we were present, and it seemed to me, as the worshippers, seated upon their mats, or kneeling and bowing their heads till their foreheads touched the ground, with their faces turned towards the direction of Mecca (which was indicated, as with the Arabs, merely by a niche in the wall), that the Christian who could contemplate his fellow-man thus engaged, without agreeable emotions, must have sadly neglected the cultivation of that charity which his religion so strongly enjoins.

We ascended, after this, to the chief tower of the mosque, which presented to us a fine view of the town and its ancient fortress, and beyond this a broad expanse of the plains around, in the midst of which the great river was seen at intervals of its tortuous course, sparkling between alternately green and sterile banks, like a great chain of lakes, under the reflected rays of the noonday sun.

From the Tatar quarter, we drove back to the upper town, and alighted in one of the public places, in order to view a monument erected in honour of the Russian Poet Derscharvinse, which had been completed and thrown open since our arrival in Kazan. It consists merely of the statue of the poet placed upon a pedestal of galvanic plastic, and the name in Russian characters, with the date, 1846, which was that at which the statue was set upon the pedestal. And this best epitaph of every man of sufficient celebrity to render his memory dear to his country, is as creditable to the taste, as the monument itself to the estimation of merit, possessed by the Russians.

I could not help here calling to mind the curious instance of desecration or perverted taste, to be seen among ourselves in the inscription upon the pedestal of

the monument of the greatest of all bards in all time, in Westminster Abbey, where the passage taken from the poet, which figures to the imagination the airy nothing that will be left after the dissolution of "this great globe, and all that it inhabit," by the simile of a fleeting cloud, not remaining behind, is shorn alike of its grandeur and its propriety, by the substitution, for this noble figure, of that of the remnant of a stranded vessel after a sea-storm.

The day after this tour, it was my fate to be the obstacle to our departure from Kazan, from the cause that had hitherto detained us. On the thirteenth day after our arrival, however, and the first of the month of September, we were both well enough to obey the mandate of the physician; and we passed the morning in making preparations for recommencing our journey the same evening.

We were both already tolerably armed; but the accounts which we heard here of the occasional boldness of some straggling robbers upon the opposite side of the Ural Mountains especially, induced us to consider the necessity of augmenting our means of self-defence. Nevertheless, such is the state of the law in Russia regarding combats between honest people and rogues, that it is always a matter of question with travellers, whether it is prudent or imprudent to carry any arms whatsoever. As the law stands, indeed, a traveller's position may become greatly embarrassing, and doubly dangerous, without an extraordinary amount of coolness. Thus, be his life ever so precious, or his property valuable, before he may resist his assailants he must count their number; for unless he should actually be opposed by at least three against one, which, in case of the flight of all the rogues he might leave alive, it would be difficult to prove, he cannot kill the most determined robber he may meet, without incurring the highest

penalty of the law. However, as we found a weapon which indeed was a favourite one of mine, the tomahawk, was to be had in Kazan, we both made this addition to our arms, and each loaded one of our pistols with goose shot only, that at least we might not expose ourselves to such consequences, unless life itself were immediately at stake.

The alarm concerning the cholera was very great at the time we were preparing to leave Kazan. News had the day before arrived, of the dreaded pestilence having reached Seratow, about three or four hundred versts further down the river, where a brother of the Governor of Kazan, with a member of his family, both of whom had left this but a few days before, quite free from apprehension, had fallen victims to the disease, and, that about 350 souls a-day were dying in that vicinity.

We found an opinion prevalent here, that the mysterious cause of the disease was an insect wholly invisible, which swept along the surface of streams. I thought when I first heard of this, that the impression probably proceeded from some of the conjectures of men of science in Europe. We ascertained, however, that this opinion was entertained by the inhabitants of the coast of the Caspian Sea, and that the Tatars had received it as an indisputable fact from the Persians passing up the Volga, in their voyages to Nijhni Novgorod.

## CHAP. XII.

### JOURNEY FROM KAZAN TO THE URAL MOUNTAINS.

Tatar Villages. — Aspect of the Country. — Health of Travellers. — Forests. — Party of Exiles. — Peasants. — Ravines. — Government of Perm. — Improvement of Roads. — Artificial Lights. — Peasants' Houses. — Arrival at Perm. — Characteristics of the Russians. — The city of Perm. — An Anglo-Dane. — Departure from Perm. — Aspect of the Country. — Cranberry of the Ural. — Iron Manufactories. — Commerce of the District. — The Ural Mountains. — Aspect. — Forests. — Animals. — Mineral Productions. — Sources of Rivers. — The Travellers' Impression of Russia.

The weather was still hot upon the day that we left Kazan, and the heat continued during the earlier part of the night. We stopped to breakfast at an early hour, on the first morning of our journey, at the small Tatar town of Meteski Malié. As it was very early, we saw but a few men in the streets, and no women. After this, we passed through another Tatar village called Kowdausaw, situated in a vale, and composed of neat log dwellings. At one o'clock we passed a third Tatar village, called Iangulovskaia, situated in a wide valley between hills of little elevation.

Though these villages are prettily situated, and have an air of neatness within, the total absence of women in the streets renders them gloomy to the stranger at all hours. Even where there were boys playing, there were no girls; as if all our species had been of one sex. We noticed in these, as well as in several other Tatar villages, very frequent instances of inflamed eyes among

the men, and several of blindness; but we could not hear of any opinion prevalent concerning the cause of this.

The country, that we had found slightly undulated since we left Nijhni Novgorod, every where save in the narrow plain of the Volga, was now more hilly; and it increased in natural beauty as we proceeded. At three o'clock, we obtained a distant view of two Tatar villages, one of which lay at the foot of a hill we were descending, and the other upon the declivity of the opposite hill, and out of our track. The view from this hill was more gratifying than any of the mere rural prospects we had before seen, on account of the greater undulations of the ground here, than in any part of the country through which we had passed.

About five o'clock we arrived at the district town of Malmish, which being the border town of the proper Tatar country, is inhabited as well by Russians as Tatars. Between six and seven o'clock, we passed the River Viatka, and at nine we supped at Maletskaia.

I confess, when we left Kazan to renew our journey, with the fatigues which we heard we had still to expect from the same causes from which we had already suffered so much, I was sceptical concerning the motives and the virtue, of the doctor's advice, by which we were hurried away, and much disposed to think it proceeded from his desire to get all the invalids out of the town before the cholera arrived; but the spirits we had enjoyed during the past day, and the evident improvement in our state of health, already proved this suspicion to have been unfounded and illiberal. We had very little rest, nevertheless, during the second night of our journey, on account of the state of the roads, which was precisely the same as we had before experienced. But, at an early hour we breakfasted at Moukikaksinskaia.

Upon resuming our journey we entered a pine forest, which occupied two hours in passing. After this, we found some improvement in the roads, which were again planted with birches, of which we had seen but few in the Tatar country; and we took advantage of the opportunity offered us for an hour or two's sleep.

We were now in what is called the Vodiaqui country, which we still found abounding more or less in woods as we proceeded. Soon after noon we reached the village of Kajilskaia, situated in a romantic valley, and possessing a neat painted church. There were, however, very few signs in the fields here of the labour of an intelligent or industrious people, and we found still less of comfort or plenty within the house that we entered. Nothing, certainly, invited us to take a meal here, except our appetites. These however, as our state of health was hourly improving, had already become very good, and were little disposed to be fastidious; so that, without great anxiety concerning the quality of the viands we might find, as we were to change here, we requested the peasants, who seemed more indifferent to our wants than most of those we had previously met, to give us anything with which they might happen to be provided. We were doomed, however, to some disappointment; for they had nothing to bring us but blue-berries, and eggs of which their whole stock was but two, and which proved such as were fit only for travellers nearer the point of starving than we were.

After this, we entered another forest, which continued, with occasional settlements formed precisely like those in our new districts in Canada, where houses are built in the centres of square patches of cleared land in the woods, until we arrived in the evening at Sumisimojginskaia, where we supped at a late hour upon a brace of partridges which we had bought from

some peasant sportsmen that we chanced to meet up the road.

After again resuming our journey, we overtook party of exiles upon their march towards Siberi There were thirty men on foot in chains, and fi women, and several men in waggons; and they wer guarded by only four soldiers on foot and two mounte Cossacks.

On the morning of the 4th we took our *samovar* a Zura. I shall mention here a little personal peculiarity, rather of the *toilette* than of the proper costume of the Russian peasants, partly for lack of any novel incident to note, and partly, that its effect was more apparent here, on account of the greater number of the curious among the younger sort of the people that surrounded us as we sat in our *tarantass*, awaiting the completion of some arrangements that were making for our departure. It consists of the manner in which the hair is worn by the men, which to the eye of a stranger greatly disfigures them. It is not cut properly upon the head, but very regularly round the forehead, either even with, or a little below, the eyes, and even with a line between the lower part of the ears behind; while the throat, and the portion of the back of the head which is below the line to which the hair falls, is kept close shaven. Thus a Russian peasant's head, when it is without a hat or cap, which is its ordinary condition at this season of the year, resembles a mop turned upside down; and as a habit prevails among the peasants of continually shaking their heads, to throw the hair which hangs over their forehead from off their eyes, the effect is precisely that of trundling a mop; and one can hardly help thinking this is not without its effect upon the seat of intelligence beneath their trundling poles. Some of them, however, wisely cut the front of their hair in an arch immediately above

the organs of vision, which, although it makes the face very much resemble that of the owl, has the advantage of relieving the party from the pain of continually shaking the head, and the stranger from the disagreeable sight of a human head turned into, and trundled like, a mop.

There is another circumstance which tends to heighten the ludicrous in this peasant custom. The horses of the interior parts of Russia, never being trimmed, and never having any portion of their manes or tails, or of the hair upon any part of their bodies cut, have their heads, foreheads and eyes especially, so completely covered, that they are forced to resort to the same custom as the peasants, of everlastingly shaking the head, except when on the trot, when the wind divides their hair, without which they could make but very little use of their eyes. Thus, several times, as we sat in our *tarantass*, we thought that the human and *chevaline* heads sufficiently assimilated the biped and the quadruped, to produce one of those impressions that may be occasionally useful in reminding us of our affinity with the rest of the animal creation.

On continuing our journey, we found the country abounding more than at any time previously, in those deep ravines and narrow valleys, which have been before mentioned, and which, as far as my experience goes, are found more or less prevailing, not alone upon the steppes of Russia, but throughout all extensive plains of alluvial formation. At twelve o'clock we changed at a village with a church, in the midst of a country about half cultivated and half covered with the natural forest.

Early in the afternoon, we passed the boundary between the Vodiaqui country and the Government of Perm; and never was there a change in a traveller's affairs more rejoiced in, than that which we now found

in the improved condition of the roads. We were s delighted indeed with what we now experienced, that w indulged alternately in extolling the good governor o Perm, and speaking ill of the governors of the province behind us. But in truth, the real cause of the better condition of the roads in the department that we were now entering, and of the worse condition of those in the departments which we had already passed through, was beyond the responsibility of any of the representatives of their sovereign. The better roads in the government of Perm, were the results of the riches of the department in mines both of iron, and the precious metals. They were here every where heaped up and gravelled, and were little inferior to our own roads that are not yet macadamized.

We stopped to dine at a village called Klanovskaia, where we had excellent *stchee*, potatoes, and barley soup, and several dishes composed chiefly of eggs and milk.

Upon quitting the village, we found the country still improving in natural beauty, and we passed over several eminences, one of which afforded us a view, only equalled, of all we had seen in Russia, by that mentioned between Nijhni Novgorod and the passage of the Volga. The road continued good; and at sunset we reached the large village of Sosnovskaia, and late in the evening we supped at Doubrovskaia.

We found the inhabitants of these villages without any other artificial light than that which they obtain from burning the chips of some of the more resinous firs which abound in their country. These they place in tubes of iron, furnished with hooks, by which, when the chips are lighted, they are hung to, and kept clear of, the wall.

At six o'clock in the morning of the 5th, we crossed the River Kama at Ochansk, while we were both in the

happy state of unconsciousness in which the better condition of the roads enabled us to indulge. We took our early *samovar* at Poloudennaia, which is situated in a tolerably cultivated country. We observed in this village more than the ordinary appearance of industry among the inhabitants, both within and without their dwellings. The good woman who prepared our meal had eight children, of which one was still in the cradle. We were amused by the manner in which she contrived to meet the several calls that divided her attention. She had suspended the cradle from a pole of supple wood, to form a spring by which it could be kept swinging, and she had attached a string to her arm and to the pole, long enough to allow her to renew the movement of the spring when it ceased, at whatever part of the room she might happen to be at work.

Soon after we resumed our journey, we passed a village upon the River Verkny Moolinsk, belonging, we were informed, to the Princess Booter, one of the richest subjects of the realm. There was an iron manufactory near the river, and several craft were lying afloat in the stream as we passed by; and houses were every where building in the village, which exhibited all the evidences of increase of wealth, and of a growing population. The princess, however, who resided at St. Petersburg, and who no doubt thought the pleasures of the court more suitable to her sex and rank than the turmoil of iron manufactories near the bounds of Europe, was only known here through her agents, for several of whom very nice houses were constructing. On the same day we arrived at Perm.

The city of Perm is the capital of the extensive government of the same name, and is the seat of a bishopric. It was founded by order of Catherine II. so late as in the year 1780, and is situated at the point at which the River Ianitchevska falls into the Kama,

which is the largest of all the rivers that take their rise in the Ural Mountains, and one of the principal tributaries of the Volga. It had lately been almost destroyed by fire, but was now fast recovering from the ravages of the destructive element; and it had already all the buildings and offices of a capital of a government, and many elegant private houses, which are placed at irregular distances apart, on either side of its broad and parallel streets. Perm, like all the Russian towns that have been restored after their destruction by the same element, or have received their principal embellishments since the era of Peter the Great, presents the aspect of youth designed for mighty development at mature age. This planning of towns certainly indicates a foresight and care for the comfort and interests of posterity, such as we rarely find any traces of, in the works of the past generations in any of the older countries of Europe, and very little disposition to imitate any where, in the present age. And from this we may infer, that the government in this instance has triumphed over the tendency generally prevailing among the Russian people, wholly to sacrifice the future to the passing advantages of the hour. The wealthy *boyar* by, it must be confessed, a generous disposition towards the more agreeable errors—"*abundat dulcibus vitiis*"—sports with the produce of industry, as if wealth had no other field for its employment than the gratification of the epicurean desires of its possessors; while the *mujik* too often lives as if there were no morrow. Thus, when a century more of time has approved the judgment of the founders of the towns now new, in regard to the sites that have been chosen, and streets are formed of houses such as those already erected, and when those towns whose position has not warranted the original plans are curtailed of their undue proportions, no country on earth will be able to

boast of so many convenient, elegant, and healthy towns, as the now newly settled, and yet still thinly populated districts of Russia.

The city of Perm contains about 4000 inhabitants, who are for the most part occupied in the smelting of iron, copper, and other mineral productions of the mines within the government, and in commerce with Nijhni Novgorod and other places, depending upon the exchange of productions by the Volga and its tributaries.

We remained but a few hours in this city, on account of the lateness of the season, and the increasing risk of being delayed by the falling of the snow in the mountains, which would have rendered it difficult for us to pass them with the wheeled carriage in which we were travelling. We made, however, a visit to the great depôt of iron here, which exhibited a busy scene, purely commercial.

We had heard on arriving here, that there was an Englishman in the town, and we had made an unsuccessful search for him while we were on our walk. But soon after our return to our hotel, the gentleman, having already heard of our arrival, came to pay us a visit, and proved to be Mr. Boiling, a British subject, but a native of the island of Heligoland, and of Danish origin. Our meeting here with this gentleman was, however, a fortunate accident for us, as he belonged to Ikaterinburg, upon the opposite side of the mountains, and had been waiting for an opportunity to return into Siberia; and as we had plenty of room for him, he agreed to accompany us.

We left Perm about sun-set. During the first part of our journey we passed through several Tatar villages, at two of which we changed horses during the night; and we arrived at an early hour in the morning of the 6th at the small district town of Koungour.

Soon after leaving Koungour, we crossed a small stream. The road by which we ascended the hill upon the opposite side of the ravine through which this stream passed, was formed upon a solid bed of alabaster.

The next considerable village which we passed was called Morgaunova. The country after this exhibited agreeable natural scenery, with hills of variegated forms, and abounding in firs. The soil is here composed of a fine black mould; and though the natural vegetation and the luxuriance of the forests, indicated great fertility, there were but a few scattered inhabitants, and a very little cultivation, where the land seemed most to invite the settlement of a rural population.

About noon, we came upon the eastern side of the summit of a hill that we had ascended, from which we obtained a fine view of the country. Towards evening, we reached Atstritskaia, where we dined.

Early the next morning we arrived at Kirgishanskaia, which was formerly a considerable fortress, but is now a desolate and nearly deserted village. Here we first met with the cranberry of the Ural, which seemed to me to resemble that of Newfoundland, commonly called by the Europeans settled in that island the partridge-berry, rather than the larger cranberry of the continent of America. These acid berries are usually eaten here boiled in milk, and without sugar. We breakfasted upon them with a little bread. But as our tastes required sugar, and there was none to be obtained, we had hardly now a fair opportunity of judging of their quality compared with that of those we had been accustomed to eat elsewhere. But subsequent trials enable me to pronounce them equally well-flavoured with those of America, but less acid.

Early in the day, we passed a broad stream, upon the banks of which stood a large iron manufactory, belonging to the Countess of Strogonoff, who, we were told,

was the owner of no less than 80,000 serfs. Every thing here wore the appearance of an important town in embryo, which, if the demand for iron in the western countries of Europe continues, must rapidly develop itself. There are large establishments here also for the construction of vessels to carry the produce of the mines to Nijhni Novgorod. Some vessels were in frame upon the stocks, and some that were completed, were afloat; and we were informed, that there were many built here of the burden of no less than 200 tons. They are open craft, with enormous beams upon a level with their gunwales, and with sides as solid as those of ships that navigate the ocean. We heard that about 400 of these craft were annually loaded here for Nijhni Novgorod, and that fifty of these carried tallow coming from Siberia, a portion of which, by the Volga, the Lake Ladoga, and the Neva, finds its way even to England. The rest are loaded with iron and copper from the mines of those minerals in this vicinity.

The last of these incipient commercial cities which we passed, was the yet mere village of Vinkintz, which lies upon a stream of the same name. The chief workshop and building of a manufactory, and a large church, formed conspicuous objects, around which new houses were constructing, and the long straight lines of Russian streets beginning to appear.

We had been gradually ascending to the more elevated country of the Ural Mountains from the time we quitted Perm, and every step, as we proceeded, presented new and more picturesque scenery. But these mountains are more remarkable, on account of their geographical position and their mineral riches, than distinguished among those grander objects of nature which, in several parts of the earth, raise their heads above the region of the clouds, and remain clothed in perpetual snow. The highest peak along the whole

range of the Ural, which is Pavdenskoi Kamin, is only 6,400 feet above the level of the sea; and there are many passes where the elevation does not exceed 2,100 feet. Throughout almost the whole of their extent, they present forests, which vary in kind and in growth, in proportion to the latitudes under which they flourish. We found them abounding, as we proceeded, in the varieties of the fir tribes, including the pine of several species, of very stunted growth, but with which were mingled the silver birch, and a few limes, oaks, and elms, from none of which a leaf seemed yet to have fallen. In some parts, the cedar is found, and in others the larch. But the larch, we were confidently assured by the gentleman who was now travelling with us—and it is a remarkable fact—is found only upon the eastern side of the mountains; which, indeed, our experience, as far as it went, confirmed. But in those forests which lie south of the parallel at which we crossed the range, the oak and the lime are more abundant; while towards the north, beyond the sixtieth degree of latitude, even the hardy birch is scarcely found.

Almost all the wild animals of many species common to Europe and the temperate zone, are found in the Ural Mountains; and bears, foxes, wolves, and several kinds of game, such as grouse, the black-cock, and the partridge, are abundant.

The minerals which are found in them, and comprise the chief wealth of the district, are, gold, silver, platina, lead, and iron; but salt, marble, malachite and the load-stone, are also found here; and, as may be seen by the collections in the museums at St. Petersburg, they have contributed jasper, agates, amethysts, and diamonds to the world's riches in precious stones.

Though the geographical position of the Ural chain is too well known as the boundary between Europe and Asia, to need any remarks in this place, we may make

a few observations concerning their extent, and the rivers to which they give rise.

The course of the chief portion of these mountains is nearly due north and south; and their range is from the fifty-fifth to the sixty-fifth degree of north latitude, along the meridian of about the sixtieth degree of east longitude from Greenwich. But below the fifty-fifth degree, they incline more towards the west, and terminate in the latitude of about fifty-one degrees and a half, upon the River Ural, along the course of which is continued the division line of the two quarters of the globe, until that river falls, after a course of about 600 miles, into the Caspian Sea. Towards the north, beyond the sixty-fifth degree, the mountains take a north-east course, and terminate upon the shores of the Arctic Sea, in the seventieth degree of north latitude. The whole of their range comprehends a distance of 1,200 miles. There is, however, throughout the range great inequality in their breadth in different parallels of their course. Sometimes, in forming distinct chains, like many other mountains, they reach to the breadth of seventy miles, while at other points, their breadth does not exceed seven miles. Where they are broadest, they abound in lakes and marshes; and, in several districts, are found sulphureous and other mineral springs.

The principal rivers which take their rise in the Ural Mountains, are, the Kama, on the west side of the chain, and already mentioned as a branch of the Volga, and the Sosva, which falls into the Ob upon the east side, and the Zura, which falls into one of the tributaries of the same great Siberian river.

Our ascent of these mountains, which was always gradual, and often imperceptible, was hardly more apparent as we approached the highest elevation. The same forests, also, continued to abound, varied only by

the trees in their several varieties being more stunted in their growth. There was, in fact, but little variation from the general character of the ground and its productions, as we proceeded, though in some places we observed the granite rocks to protrude. The road was neither tortuous, nor locked in by prominences, nor by hills rising around, as usually happens upon the ascent of mountains; and before we reached the highest point over which the traveller passes by this route, we were able for some time to contemplate an extensive and noble view of the wooded country over which we had passed, which appeared stretching out to the compass of the view, or terminating in irregular and faint lines along the eastern horizon.

About two hours after mid-day, we reached the highest elevation that the traveller attains by this pass in these mountains, which is 3,700 feet above the level of the sea. It is marked by a cross, which our companion informed us had been placed there by the Archduke Michael, the surviving brother of the reigning Emperor, on the occasion of a journey which he performed into Siberia.

But while we yet stand upon these remarkable mountains, which divide the two most populous quarters of the globe, and form the line of demarcation between the two grand countries of the Russian Empire, we are involuntarily led to consider for a moment the moral as well as physical position in which we are placed at this period of our journey, both in regard to the country from which we have ascended, and to that to which we are about to descend.

The traveller of the least sensibility in the world, might here find it impossible to avoid concentrating his impressions, and taking a retrospective glance over his several labours accomplished, with the incidents by which they have been marked, and at the same time

indulging in visions of new scenes and new modes of life, about to come under his observation and engage his interest. The passage of mountains is always among the remarkable events in a traveller's progress, and more especially, whatever may be their character, physically considered, when they divide great empires or portions of empires inhabited by people of dissimilar habits and manners.

My two fellow-travellers and myself here alighted from our *tarantass*, walked, talked, and sat on the turf, and with pleasure contemplated the scenery, which was chiefly to be observed towards the side from which we had ascended; and the merchant and myself summed up our opinions concerning what we had seen and experienced during our sojourn in that portion of the empire which we were now leaving behind us.

We had, previously to the journey we had undertaken together, severally visited the two great capitals, as well as some other towns of the empire, and we had now seen many of the villages. We had mixed more or less with the inhabitants every where, and had had the opportunity of observing something of the character and manners of the people, and of comparing these with such as we had observed among the people of the elder nations of Western Europe. To express our impressions in a few words, it must suffice to say, that we both quitted Russia Proper with high opinions of two out of four classes of the people with whom we had come the most frequently in contact, or with whom we had had the best opportunity of associating, and with the reverse impression of the remaining classes. The Russian educated gentleman, and the *mujik* or peasant, had by their suavity and politeness, however differently these were displayed, wherever we met them, and in all transactions we had had with them, equally gained our regard and esteem. But of the inferior classes of the

commercial part of the population, and the under classes of the *chinovnik* or officials generally, we unwillingly entertained the most unfavourable impressions. Nevertheless, the good elements are so predominant in the proper Russian character, as it must be perceived from the conduct of the peasant, whose most conspicuous qualities are, piety, loyalty, fidelity, hospitality, quickness, and everlasting good humour, and are so deeply seated, that we may hope, as an accomplished education has finished the gentleman, some improvement in the adaptation of the education of the other classes, may effect great and early changes in their manners also, and in their moral character. It is, however, at present said, and, I am persuaded, with good reason, that such knowledge as these classes have been able to acquire, has hitherto tended rather to corrupt than improve both their manners and moral conduct, and become a positive evil instead of a blessing to themselves and all their fellow subjects.

After thus dismissing the past, we now fixed our thoughts more fully upon the countries before us. We were about to enter a new region, in another quarter of the globe, inhabited in some parts, by nations and tribes not yet subdued to admit more exact laws and government than are necessary to raise them from the sad state of man in his original barbarism to the first degrees of civilisation, and, in other parts by tribes not even physically overcome, or in a condition to take the first step in the common progress of man from the condition of the savage to that of refined life. We were about to enter that country, rather known to the world in its character of a penal colony, than as the nurse of new races of men doomed to multiply indefinitely, and reserved to unite in the general efforts of man to raise and ameliorate his condition. Such, indeed, may be the portion of the Siberians long before the more ancient and

stubborn race that borders upon their territory in the south, have acquired sufficient knowledge to enable them to stay that destruction, which, like a law of nature, seems to await nations that come too rapidly in contact with others that are greatly in advance of them in the essentials of general civilisation. It was at least our hope, that we should not quit Siberia with less agreeable feelings than those in which we summed up the impressions with which we quitted Russia Proper.

## CHAP. XIII.

### DESCENT FROM THE MOUNTAINS INTO SIBERIA.

View of the Siberian Plains.— An Ostrog.— A Tatar Tomb.— Appearance of a distant Village.—View of Tributary Stream of the River Ob.—View of Ikaterinburg.—Arrival at Ikaterinburg.— Caravansary.— Reminiscence here of an English Traveller.—Iron Manufactory.—Walk through the Town.—Convent Burial Ground.—Primitive Condition of the Arts of Architecture and Sculpture.— Native Genius of the Russians.

We were not far beyond the highest point of elevation by this pass of the Ural Mountains, in our descent toward the plains of Siberia, before we perceived a change in the character of the vegetation. The same trees and shrubs that we had observed in our ascent, were here more thinly sown, and more stunted in growth, and abounded in evidence of the effects of their greater exposure to the winter storms and east winds, than those which flourished upon the opposite side of the mountains. The larch too, which, as already mentioned, is not found upon the European side, nor found at all in that part of the country which lies east of the range, we observed already in sufficient quantity to attract our particular notice.

We had not proceeded far, when a prospect opened before us, such as our more gradual ascent had not prepared us to expect. The vast steppe or plain, which commences at the very base of the mountains, was seen stretching out to the bounds of the view, with scarce a break in the straight line which seemed drawn along the margin at which the horizon met the sky; while the

nearer prospect was varied, on our left hand, by a view of the village of the gold washings of Neviansk, though indistinctly seen, and a silvery stream, wending its course through the dark firs that environ it, and on the right, by a greater variety of colours in the vegetation.

As we advanced, the village that we had seen from the higher point of the road, became hid from our sight, while the stream, which is that of the Neiva, one of the second or third-class tributaries of the great River Ob, became more visible; so that we were able now to trace its course through a great extent of country, in its passage towards the Irtysch and the Ob, through which its waters reach the Arctic Sea by the Gulf of Obischer.

We had not made above a third of the descent, before we obtained a view of the white edifices of the first Siberian town, Ikaterinburg, situated in a dusky and gloomy portion of the plain. The town, however, and the distant view soon disappeared again: and nothing was now to be seen, to break the monotonous character of the road, until we passed two Tatar tombs upon some elevated ground upon our right hand; but concerning which, neither our new fellow-traveller nor our *yemstchik* could give us any account, nor had heard any legend. We passed now, also, an *ostrog*, or place of rest for the exiles, which is the first at which they stop after passing the summit of the mountains, which so many are doomed never to recross.

We reached Ikaterinburg about sunset; and after driving up a newly formed wide street, carpeted with moss and grass, and the houses in which stood from about 50 to 200 yards apart, we turned into a caravansary resembling that in which we spent so many sad days at Kazan.

Our new fellow-traveller now left us for the present, and as it was too late to make a survey of the town, we ordered some supper to be prepared; and we

were very soon seated with good appetites over our first meal in the land of exiles, which consisted of a brace of partridges and an excellent dish of the rarely wanting *stchee*.

Our landlord, who was by birth an Italian, came and seated himself by us while we were over our supper, that he might hear what news we had brought from the opposite side of the mountains. We had, however, nothing to tell him, save the character and extent of the commercial transactions at Nijhni Novgorod, compared with those of other years, all which my companion was fully capable of communicating to him. After this, he asked us some questions concerning our object in coming into Siberia; and, when these had been replied to, he made an especial inquiry of myself, who, he had observed by my passport, was an Englishman. He wished, he now said, particularly to know whether it was my intention to wait upon the general, who was residing here and acting as civil governor of the district. In answer to this, I informed him that it was certainly my intention so to do the very next morning, if not prevented by similar causes to those which had kept us both close prisoners in the caravansary during our stay at Kazan. Upon this he explained the cause of his curiosity, by giving us the following little account of the visit of an Englishman to Ikaterinburg, and which I cannot forbear reporting.

Mine host of the caravansary related, that about ten years ago, an Englishman, a stranger to every one in the place, drove into his court, and sent up a servant that he had with him, to request the attendance of the landlord; and, upon our host's descending to the court, the stranger asked him whether his best apartments were unoccupied, and, on hearing that they were so, requested, without asking any other question, that

they might be immediately washed, and have fires lighted in them; and he begged that he might be informed when they were perfectly dry, for that he intended to remain in his carriage until he was well assured that they were clean, and dry and warm, and fit for his reception.

The landlord, though not much flattered by the opinion which the Englishman seemed to entertain of the cleanliness of his house, yet willing to believe that the stranger was an invalid, invited him to occupy his own apartment until the best rooms in the hotel were prepared to receive him. This, however, the stranger refused to do, persisting in his resolution not to leave his carriage until the apartments which he had requested might be prepared for him, were ready. Upon this, the landlord set half his household to work, to accomplish his promise as speedily as possible. But, although the rooms were reported within an hour to be washed and completely dried, the stranger remained above two hours in his carriage before he ascended to them.

After taking possession of his rooms, he remained for several weeks at the hotel, without communicating with any one, except through his servant, who was a Russian whom he had brought with him, and without experiencing any molestation from any one, and occupied chiefly in reading; and during this time he was rarely seen abroad. At length, however, whether from any suspicion of his objects in Siberia, excited by his seclusion, or his negligence in not conforming to the usage of the country in paying his respects to the governor, or from personal offence taken on this account, the general who was at that time governor of the district, sent him word that he had been expecting a visit from him. The Englishman, upon receiving this message, which was brought by a private servant of the

governor, sent word, in reply, that he had no intention to make any such visit. The governor, however, for the present, took no notice of this answer to his message. But after another week had passed, he sent word through the police, to command the Englishman's attendance. To this, the Englishman replied, that the governor had his passport, and, that if he wanted anything more of him, he must himself come to him. This was, however, rather too much for the patience of the general, who now sent the chief of the police to conduct the Englishman to his presence.

The Englishman being made acquainted with the order by the chief of the police himself, who now came to put it into execution, and being without any apparent means of averting the summons which he had determined not to obey, after considering a little, seemed to assent, and ordered his own vehicle out, and then descended in company with the officer, apparently as well disposed now to obey the laws or customs of the country, as if he had been a Russian subject. On the arrival of the party in the court, a little question of etiquette arose concerning the right of entering the vehicle the last, in which the Englishman by his politeness lulled any suspicion of his intentions, and gained his object in obtaining his claim, as the owner of the vehicle, to be the last to take his place in it. But the Russian was no sooner seated, than his supposed prisoner gave the *isvoshtschik*, who he had taken care had previously mounted the box, a quick order to drive on, which being promptly obeyed, after the fashion of all *employés* in Russia, with the reply, *sloutches* (directly), the Russian was at least driven far enough and detained long enough, to afford the Englishman time to return to his apartments before he could be overtaken, and where he now bolted and barred himself in, at the same time giving orders to his servant, that

no one should be admitted into the outer rooms without his express permission. The chief of the police, however, returned at a convenient time, with some of his fellows, and demanded that he might be immediately admitted; upon which, the servant, not daring to disobey the order, unbarred the doors, and hastened to give notice to his master of what his necessitous position had obliged him to do. Upon this, the Englishman flew in a violent passion, and thrashed his servant so soundly before the entrance of the police into the inner apartment, that the man was afterwards found to have received serious injury. Our countryman was now, however, a prisoner; nevertheless, he was detained merely on account of the manner in which he had treated his servant; and finally, the affair terminated in a summary process, and the judgment of the *Ispravnik*, or chief magistrate of the district, on account of the injury done to the servant, in which the eccentric stranger was mulcted in the sum of 12,000 rubles, and received his passport to return into Russia.

On the morning after our arrival at Ikaterinburg, our companion from Perm called to offer me his aid as interpreter and guide, while the merchant was occupied with his affairs of commerce; and, as I thought it might slightly counterbalance the unfavourable opinion that must be still held here of the politeness and good sense of my countrymen, after the eccentric adventure above related, to be very diligent in waiting upon the general (which, indeed, is a step as politic as it is proper in a traveller in Russia), we set off immediately for the government house. At the gate of the building, however, we learned from the sentinels or soldiers of the guard of honour, that his Excellency was at one of the mines in the vicinity, and was not expected to return for several days.

This costless compliment thus paid, we next called

upon a resident English engineer, Mr. Tate, possessin an extensive iron manufactory at this place. M countryman was at home, and we were conducted b him through the different departments of his establish ment, and afterwards introduced to his family. We found Mrs. Tate a remarkably handsome German lady, of a polite education and of very attractive manners and conversation, which those who have been often for long periods without the society of any of the refined portion of the fair sex, and have the prospect before them of a renewal of the deprivation, know well how to appreciate. She had been taken from her own country to Hull, in England, when very young, where she became united with her present husband, who had raised himself by his industry and perseverance, from the humbler ranks of the artizans of his country to his present position.

There was also another English engineer at Ikaterinburg, whom we next called upon—Mr. Jackson, who had been sent into Siberia by the Russian government to aid and extend the operations of the iron works in this vicinity, and had but just arrived. We found this gentleman at present busy with his wife, a countrywoman of his own, in making all the necessary arrangements to guard against the cold and storms of their approaching first winter in the country.

During the remainder of the day, we were occupied with an examination of the town. Ikaterinburg was founded by the Empress Katherine, and, like all the Russian towns that have been founded, or have received their chief embellishments since the era of Peter the Great, presents the aspect of vigorous minority designed for mighty development at its mature age. Scarcely a house is now standing within fifty yards of another, and sometimes several hundred yards intervene between buildings of the same class. The few public buildings already erected, although constructed with

little assistance from the rules of art, are yet fine to the eye that will not be critical. Some of the houses, as in the newer quarter of Kazan, are already of brick. In the part of the town reserved to be some day the most attractive and fashionable, there is a natural lake of about two versts in circumference, and by the side of which houses of a sufficient degree of elegance for the nonage of the town have been erected. Among these stands that of Mr. Tate, at whose door there was already lying a miniature pleasure steamer, doubtless the first vessel of the yacht class that has yet floated upon the inland waters beyond the Ural Mountains; and parties of pleasure, accompanied by music, we were told, formed chiefly of the official gentlemen of the place, frequently during the summer months float upon the lake on board this little specimen of that wonder of the age, which was but yesterday as great a marvel to ourselves as it is to-day to the Siberians. Thus, the sounds of music and mirth, in the good fellowship of science and the arts, have already been wafted over the silent plains around the first Siberian town, in notes that seem to announce that a new era in the history of the country is at hand.

There is a convent of nuns at Ikaterinburg, to the church of which we next directed our steps. We found the doors, however, closed; we therefore contented ourselves with entering the burial-ground. We found many memorials, of those chiefly who had departed life in the service of the government here, since the time of the foundation of the town. There were some few sculptured monuments, partly of marble. These had been brought from one of the towns in Russia; but they did not give us a much higher idea of the advance of the arts at the town from which they came, than that which we might suppose, from the pedestals upon which they stood, to be their condition, at Ikaterinburg. Not, indeed, among all the monuments, whether time-honoured or

fresh from the hand of the artist, did we see a straight perpendicular or horizontal line. And among many of those constructed of stone that had fallen, were to be seen others crumbling away, as it seemed, for want of the application of the simplest rules of art in their construction. Even the church itself, with its gay white and green colours, so agreeable to contemplate at a distance, had not a straight line either in the body of the building or in its tower. And we afterwards observed that, of five churches of which the town has to boast, there was not an instance of a tower or spire, old or new, in which the deviation from the perpendicular was not to be distinctly seen. It should, however, be here observed, that churches are found in even some of the better towns of Russia more or less wanting also in the application of the first elements of art. Nevertheless, this is even one of many instances which exhibit both the native genius and the faculty of imitation, which form remarkable features in the proper Russian character. A Russian, even often a mere peasant, who knows not the first elements of geometry, who has no knowledge of the properties of the angle save that which is innate in every quick intelligence, builds a stately, spacious building, which, at a careless glance, seems a beautiful edifice, but which, examined more closely, exhibits defects which it seems impossible could arise from errors that might be committed by one sufficiently skilled to have raised the whole. Nor, indeed, would this remark be wholly inapplicable even to the architectural works generally of the two great capitals, but more especially to those of the city, which has the advantage of the court patronage, where, with the exception of the edifices of the first order, which are for the most part the work of foreigners, there is scarcely one with a wall or tower standing perfectly upright.

The same deficiency in the rules of art is also ap-

parent in the construction of the bridges, in which it is common to see an arch, if not forming a perfect curved line, at least solid and secure, propped up by an iron frame of less than a thousandth part of its own strength, which sweeps beneath the arch, and is attached at each end to the buttresses upon which the ends of the arch rest. Even, sometimes, at a foot or two beneath the arch is seen a circle of bricks which have detached themselves from the more solid work, and rest upon the feeble iron frame which they have displaced by their mere weight.

Remarks, indeed, of a similar kind might be made concerning all the works of art and industry in Russia, except the few manufactured articles which have obtained credit abroad, and are exported in considerable quantities. Nevertheless, if the Russians have by nature, such ingenuity and invention as we have ascribed to them, what a field is opening for their exercise through the districts but now commencing the development of those resources which will, ere long, change them into populous and flourishing lands of industry and wealth!

We entered one of the private gardens, of which there are many in the town. The era in the history of other towns, at which exotic fruit trees are introduced, or at which goodly dames and young ladies water their flowers, has not yet arrived in that of Ikaterinburg. We found, however, carrots, cabbages, and potatoes, though none were very good, growing in a rich black mould, which it was difficult to believe was the native undressed soil, until we saw it in other places, where the ground was laid open for building, even from the surface to the depth of six or eight feet, and of such naturally fertilizing quality as to supersede the necessity for any sort of manure.

## CHAP. XIV.

### VISIT TO THE GOLD MINES OF NEVIANSK.

Aspect of the Country.—Deserted Village.—Gloomy Lake.—Village of the Miners.—Noble Damsels.—The Auriferous Beds.—Manner of Searching for Gold.—Operations for the Extraction of the Gold.—Working by Hand.—By Machines.—Extraction of the Quartz.—Riches of the Ural Mountains.—Extraction of Platina.—Despatch and Transport of the Gold.—Government Arrangements.—Particular Examination of the Works.

Upon the second day after our arrival at Ikaterinburg, I was accompanied by the same gentleman as on the previous day's tour, on a visit to the gold washings of Neviansk, at the distance of twenty-two versts from the town.

We engaged a droshky and a couple of spirited horses, and set off at an early hour. The temperature of the air already here indicated the approach of winter, and the thermometer was now as low as four degrees of heat; yet the atmosphere continued still serene, and the sky clear, both by night and day. The country over which we now passed, though possessing evidently the same good soil as that which we had already observed in the town, was covered with the dark running ground-spruce, amid which appeared a few birch and fir trees, sown far apart, and of stunted growth; and the road, which seemed to have been formed merely by the passage of wheeled carriages and horses, was bad.

After passing a small lake sixteen or seventeen versts from Ikaterinburg, on our right hand, we arrived at the

village from which the mines take their name. Here, on the one hand, we observed two churches standing amidst straggling houses and huts, which, to all appearance, could not together contain above 200 inhabitants, and, on the other side, quite apart from the village, several neat official dwellings, including that occupied by the special superintendent of the works, upon whom we now called to request permission to examine all that was interesting for a stranger to see in the vicinity.

We found the superintendent, a polite German, who, notwithstanding our somewhat irregular appearance, without a letter from the governor, which we ought to have previously obtained, gave us an order to pass through all the works and offices of the mines and the washings; and we set off for the centre of the scenes of interest, from which we were still several versts distant.

After driving two or three versts further, across a low and marshy country, we came to the remains of a straggling settlement of mere huts, now uninhabited and falling to ruin, in consequence of those who had dwelt in them, who were chiefly gold washers, miners, and mechanics, having removed and built another village nearer the site of the operations.

Soon after passing these wrecks of deserted huts, we came upon the shores of a lake, about six or seven versts in length and three in breadth, amidst a country of the same low character as that which we had already passed, and presenting everything that can be imagined the most opposite to the picturesque or beautiful in natural scenery, and quite in harmony with the solitude of the village in which we had not seen a living creature. The shores of this lake were surrounded by dark ground-spruce and stunted fir trees, and no birds and no bark of any kind appeared floating upon its bosom; nor were the waters, when we stopped by its

shores to look around us, now rippled by a breath of air, which might have afforded some relief to the gloomy character of the scene.

After we had driven about a verst, however, along the solitary shores, a canoe appeared near the middle of the lake, which looked as if it were bearing away the last man of a population departed in search of some more genial clime. Soon after this, we came in sight of, and shortly arrived at, the village now inhabited by the miners, which consisted merely of scattered huts, all of which were placed near the shores of the lake; and, as we thought it better to make some inquiries before proceeding further, we drove among the miners' dwellings, in the hope of finding some one or other to whom we might address ourselves. We drove about, however, for some time without seeing a living soul, and without perceiving a sign that any one of the huts had any tenants within it. At length we observed a dwelling that, from its superiority to the rest, although not painted, we conceived must be that of the immediate superintendent of the gold works; and we drove up in front of it, and alighted and knocked at the door. We knocked again and again, however, without receiving any reply. Yet, as we thought we heard voices within, we were determined to do our utmost to put ourselves in communication with the tenants of the house, if it should, indeed, have any; and we now ventured, as curious persons are wont to do, to peep in at the window. Upon this, three girls, who seemed half terrified and half amused, jumped up from the ground upon which they had been sitting beneath the window, and scampered away, half laughing and half screaming, into an inner room. We remained, however, inflexible in our purpose; and we called to them, and commenced knocking again, until one of them, whose curiosity seemed to overcome her terror, came

to the window to peep at us in her turn; upon which my companion recognised her as one of three *protégées* of the superintendent, all of whom he remembered seeing with their foster father at Ikaterinburg. As the young lady's memory, however, seemed not to be as good as my companion's, a parley took place, which was conducted with almost as much ceremony as if it had been between the besiegers of a fortress and the besieged, but which ended in my companion making himself known, and reassuring the maidens, who now opened the door, and invited us to enter, with a confidence which seemed to indicate that they felt they had been guilty of want of hospitality.

The house consisted of two rooms, the character of which was quite in keeping with the wretched appearance of the village. The only furniture we saw, consisted of two or three benches, and about the same number of bedsteads, upon which rested beds of a very coarse description. The damsels, however, brought us a bench, that we might sit down. And, attracted by the novelty of our position, and pleased with the manners of the girls, and their confidence in us, when there was probably not a male inhabitant of the village within a verst, we seated ourselves without hesitation; and they now placed themselves upon another bench near and opposite to us, and my companion, who was perfectly acquainted with their language, began to converse with them.

It was impossible not to feel great interest in these children of the wild waste amidst which this village is seated. They appeared to be between the ages of fourteen and seventeen; and their manners and their dress were quite in harmony with the character of the place, and with the position of the girls. Their entire clothing consisted of a simple loose robe or sleeved chemise of home-spun cloth, beneath which peeped

their bare feet and ankles; and there appeared a delicacy in their manner of expressing themselves, that was sufficient evidence that they had at least seen some nurture. When I remarked to my companion that this was apparent, a whole history of the girls, which he had heard before, and forgotten until this moment, flashed across his memory, and a part of which that he now related to me I must here report.

They were the daughters of parents belonging to one of the numerous classes of the nobility of the empire, and therefore, they themselves, noble. They had, however, been suddenly left orphans a few years ago, and had since been taken care of by their present protector, who, besides being superintendent of the immediate works of the mines, was a major in the army. Yet, on account of his income not being adequate to place them in a station of life commensurate with their proper rank, he had been obliged to keep them in the state of seclusion in which they here dwelt. Whatever were the instruction they received or the examples that were before them when children, as they now sat before us, busily occupied in knitting while they conversed, they seemed as full of grace and ease as they were deficient in the encumbrances attached to the European modern dress of the fair sex. Their appearance and manners, indeed, were more calculated to remind us of the nymphs of the grotto of Calypso, than of noble ladies of our age in the west of Europe, who are too often deformed, rather than adorned, by submission to the dictates of absurd fashions, originating in their *modiste's* fancies or the love of change. One of them, too, in our judgment, possessed much more of the beauty of feature and form, than falls to the share of the average of womankind.

When we took leave of them, they asked whether they should ever see us again; and, when my companion informed them, that this was very improbable,

the eldest of the three, who had spoken the most, said, as her words were interpreted to me, "Then we thank you for coming this once." But this simple and short phrase was uttered in a tone of voice and manner that impressed us with a lively sense of the true bitterness of solitude at an age at which we are most disposed to every kind of social enjoyment.

On our arrival at the seat of the operations, we found a spacious building set beneath a dam, which, by retaining the waters of the lake below which the works were seated, formed the power by which the chief operation in the extraction of the gold is performed. Upon our application for admittance, we found that the superintendent was absent for the day. The guard at the door, however, to whom we addressed ourselves, went in search of the official in charge, who soon appeared. And upon our presentation of the order, which we had obtained at Neviansk, we were immediately admitted.

The scene was very novel to us as we entered. A series of inclined planes or tables, distinct from one another, occupied either side of the building; and upon these, the washers of the ore were engaged with brushes and brooms, standing or kneeling, as the water streamed from a trough bored with holes, from above the elevated side of the tables, over the surface upon which the ore rests, to fall into a common drain, by which it finds its way to the valley; and mills at the opposite extremity of the building were, on one side, crushing the quartz rock with hammers, to prepare it for the washing, and, on the other, turning cylinders, by which one of the operations of the extraction of the metal is acomplished.

We found the official, who was acting in the place of the superintendent, polite and communicative; and I shall set down such information as we obtained from

him concerning the operations by which the ore i obtained, and the precious metal extracted from th substances with which it is found combined, togethe with some more general information upon the sam subject, for which I was indebted to a scientific Polish gentleman in the service of the government, whom I met in another part of Siberia, and whose civilities I shall have the opportunity of more particularly acknowledging in a future page.

The auriferous sands are always found in the valleys, or imbedded in the earth where valleys have formerly existed; and, in the latter case, it is rarely that they are found upon the declivity of hills.

The beds of auriferous sands are composed principally of the decomposition of *schiste talquor ferifére* and of *schiste chloriteux*, containing oxidulated crystals of iron, *agiles feldspatique*, quartz rock, and serpentine. This last substance is almost always found in an inverse proportion with the *schiste chloriteux*.

The beds which contain the deposits, follow at all times the inclination of the valleys, and are found resting upon the remains of rocks in a state of decomposition, or upon such as have been broken and severed by the action of natural phenomena.

The length of the beds is ordinarily about ten *sarjanes* (or about seventy English feet), and is seldom found to exceed thirty *sarjanes*. It bears, however, in general, a proportionate relation to that of the valleys, as these appear to have existed before the deposits of the auriferous substance were formed. In breadth they vary from a quarter of an *arshene*, which is about equal to an English ell, to three *arshenes*; and their mean depth is about one *arshene*.

The riches of these deposits are sometimes four *zolotniks*, or four-fifteenths of an ounce, to a hundred pouds of sand (a poud being 36lbs. English,) but often

does not exceed a half, and sometimes not more than a quarter of this quantity. Sands of the same bed, indeed, at one time yield from 40 to 80 *dols* (a dol being the ninety-sixth part of a *zolotnik*) for a hundred pounds, and at another, not above thirty.

The riches of any one of these auriferous beds is always greater where the valley in which the deposit is found, makes, or has at any time made, an elbow or sharp turn in the line of its course, or where the alluvious beds are deepest in the earth. Nevertheless, in both these cases, the particles of the gold obtained are smaller than when the beds lie in straight valleys, or near the surface of the earth. And it is remarked in general, that the higher the beds are upon the hills or up the valleys where they are found, the larger are the pieces of gold, but the greater their rarity.

The auriferous deposits are always covered with beds of sterile earth, which vary from half an *arshene* to four *arshenes*, and even more, in thickness, the mean, however, being about two *arshenes*. These are composed, for the most part, of land formed by vegetable deposits, but sometimes of sand of the nature of the rock in the vicinity.

It is worthy of remark, that all the alluvions of this region are found upon the eastern side of the mountains, and, in general, upon both sides of hills of secondary importance, which form independent chains, running parallel with the grander range.

The manner of searching for the gold deposits in Siberia is generally as follows: —

When a district in which any indications of gold have been discovered, or where the position of the country seems to render this probable, has been determined upon for the search, whether it belong to the government or to some private individual or company, an expedition is set on foot consisting of one draughts-

man, two foremen, one guide, two guardians, and sixteen labourers.

The search is now made for the beds of auriferous sands in the vicinity of the more mountainous portions of the district, commencing always in the valleys. Wells are first sunk; and in case of coming upon rocks, the attention of the party is turned immediately in another direction; but if otherwise, the deposits found are examined with care, to discover whence proceed the springs, and in what direction the streams have run, by which the valley may be supposed to have been formed. Some idea of the contents of the strata formed being by this means obtained, whenever fresh expectation is excited, square and broader wells are sunk, until the auriferous beds are discovered, or till the solid rocks upon which the several strata rest, are attained, and the futility of further search is apparent.

In all cases, as soon as any clear indication is discovered of the presence of any minerals or metals that may appear to be worthy of attention, a number of wells are dug around the vicinity. If, in the course of digging the wells, expectation begins to be raised by the character of the materials after they are submitted to examination, the search must be persevered in, and this must be noted in the draught. But, as soon as there seems a probability that the deposit may be sufficiently rich to be worked with profit, notice is given to the heads of the general mining administration, or to the managers of the private company, or to any individual who may possess an entire interest in the expedition. And now, when after examination of the accounts by the parties who have the highest interest in the results, with the specimens which have been sent to them, it is thought advisable to proceed farther, a reinforcement of labourers is sent, and many more wells are sunk. But it is particularly required, that the draughtsman

of the expedition should make full and correct plans of the sites of the operations, and the position of the wells that have been sunken.

In cases where any kind of rock is found above the ground in the vicinity of the wells sunken, particular notice is taken in the journal of the character of the rock, and of that of the soil or rocks which the well has exposed. Specimens of both these are sent to the administration, or to parties chiefly interested, as above-mentioned, with plans indicating very nicely the position of the upper rock and the wells. And besides these, other specimens are collected and forwarded of every remarkable mineral, found either in the mines or upon the surface of the ground.

After the earth that has been raised has been examined, the well is filled up, and a heap is made by the side of it, composed of a portion of the materials which have been raised; and a little memorial is now placed over the well, with the number marked upon it, which is designated in the plan. During these researches, or after their completion, a full geological plan is made of the entire territory explored according to a model furnished by the administration.

The plan of the journal in which the managers of the expedition register the results of their operations, is as follows:—

| Number of the well. | State of the ground. | State of the woods. | Thickness and nature of the vegetable soils. | Thickness and nature of the sterile sands. | Thickness and nature of the auriferous sands. | Nature of the rocks beneath. | Thickness and nature of the bed of auriferous sand. | Thickness and nature of the clays. | Observations. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

The operations for the extraction of the auriferous sands from the earth are as follows:—

When one of these beds of sand has been found sufficiently rich to promise remuneration, the first proceeding is to erect a building, such as that in which we

are now standing, as near as possible to the deposit that any site can be found, where there is a sufficient quantity of water for the operations; after which, the immediate preparations for the proper extraction of the sand commences.

In the first place, a rigid examination is made of the comparative value of equal quantities of sand from each of the wells, in order to ascertain at what portion of the bed the riches most abound. If water, as is very common, is now found in sufficient quantity to obstruct the operations, it is exhausted by means of small pumps. But often, the water is sufficiently abundant to need other means of preventing its impeding the course of operations; and it then becomes even necessary to turn the course of the brook from which it proceeds, by digging a ditch, by which it is diverted in a direction which shall interfere as little as possible with the auriferous sands which are about to be worked. When this is accomplished, the same ditch thus formed, serves also for a road for carts and horses to approach the bed of sand which is thrown open.

If the auriferous bed does not repose immediately upon solid rock, it is necessary to form a temporary road of wood.

If the sterile bed which covers the auriferous deposit is not more than three or four *arshenes* in thickness, and the sand is rich, the whole is thrown open, and the descent to the bed is formed by steps or inclined ways. If, on the contrary, the sands are poor, and the auriferous bed is not above two *arshenes* in thickness, it is usually worked under ground by means of galleries or tunnels of one *sarjane* in height. But these require great care in the construction, in accommodating them to the nature of the soil.

The auriferous sand is now taken up, and carried, usually by means of wheel-barrows, to the building in

which the immediate operations for the extraction of the gold take place. Sometimes the extraction of the precious metal is by means of a machine, and sometimes by washing the ore upon inclined planes or tables, and sometimes by the use of sieves, according to the abundance of water to be obtained, and the quality of the sands.

When a clayey soil is free from gravel, three men, with the aid of four horses and machines, will wash 700 or 800 pouds in a day. But where the soil is gravelly, one man, with the use only of the inclined plane or table, can wash eighty pouds in the same space of time.

The sand which contains but little clay, is usually washed with the sieve, by which process, three men will wash from 400 to 600 pouds a-day; but this requires a great quantity of water. By this method, however, many enormous beds or deposits of sand are now washed, which are found remaining of those that have already undergone the process at some former period, and of which the same number of men are able to wash from 700 to 900 pouds in the same time.

The sieve is formed of iron, and is about two *arshenes* in length and one in breadth, and its sides are about three *vershoks* in height—a *vershok* being equal to nearly an inch and three-quarters. It is so disposed, that, after it is filled with sand, a current of water is made to run into it, while two workmen are kept continually stirring the sand. The sand being thus agitated is drawn by the water through the bottom of the sieve, and falls upon a large inclined plane or table. Here a washer is occupied in pressing upwards the materials which fall from the sieve, upon which the gold and the *schlik*, by reason of their superior weight, remain towards the top of the plane, while the earth and sterile sands are carried away by the running water.

When about a hundred pouds of sand are thus

washed, the gold and the *schlik* remain separated from all the other substances; but they are still confounded with one another, until taken to another table, where the operation is completed.

The *schlik*, which is yet alone apparent—the proportion of gold being too small to discover itself amidst the dark substance with which it is mixed—is now brought to the second of these inclined tables. Here it is placed at the highest part of the table, down which a current of water is again made to run, while a washer, now with a little rake, is occupied in pushing it up towards the head of the table, as the water carries away what gravel remains, and the lighter portions of the *schlik*. The mass being now reduced to a small quantity, a brush similar to that with which we brush our clothes, is used by the washer, who, in kneeling, continues the same process with greater care, while the substance remains exposed to only a very gentle current of the water.

After persevering with this operation for some time, the gold, as the *schlik* diminishes in quantity, begins to appear; but the process is still continued, until the gold itself becomes chiefly the substance upon which the operation is performing, yet mingled with a small quantity of the *schlik*. This process here however ends, and the mass is now gathered and dried; after which a part of the tenacious alloy which still clings to the precious metal is got rid of by means of blowing upon it, and the rest by means of the loadstones. After this, the gold is pure, and ready to be submitted to the operation of fusion.

The process of washing the gold by machines is as follows: —

The sands are thrown into horizontal demi-cylinders, which are furnished with a kind of small mills of iron, with four branches placed upon an axle which passes through the cylinder. A current of water is now

directed upon the cylinder, by the movement of which the gravel and stones are thrown off. Upon leaving the demi-cylinder, all the materials fall upon a sieve, the holes in which are half an inch in breadth. The large stones are here thrown off by a horizontal cross bar which is turned by means of a vertical axle, which receives its movement from a horizontal wheel. All that passes through the sieve, falls upon an inclined plane, and thence into a trough at the bottom, of five *arshenes* in length, and of the form of a demi-cone. The interior of this receptacle is divided into several compartments, the partitions between which are a *vershok* in height.

In this manner the sand is continually agitated, until the lighter portions are carried along by the water, while the *schlik* and the gold remain, first, in the greatest quantity in the four or five first compartments, and afterwards in a less quantity in the other compartments.

The machine by which this operation is performed, is put in motion by means of a wheel with cogs, and of the radius of three-quarters of an *arshene*. The wheel is fixed upon the axle of the cylinder, and upon a wheel of the same kind, of which the diameter is three *arshenes*, and which is itself fixed on a wheel moved by horses.

There is, however, another machine, established upon the same principles, and subject only to slight modifications.

In place of a sieve in this, there is a cylinder with holes throughout its length; and in place of the washer, are substituted three little trenches having small indentations, in which a quantity of mercury is placed. The sand is put into the cylinder, which is agitated until the coarser portions of it are thrown off at an aperture at one end, while the finer pass through the holes, and fall into the trough, and thence into the receiver where the

quicksilver is placed. The gold in falling with the sand upon the surface of the mercury, attaches itself to this metal, and remains at the bottom, while the sand, which floats above, is carried away, and falls into a basin placed beneath the trench for the purpose of collecting the mercury, which is carried off from time to time by the water.

When the process of washing is completed by one of the two methods last described, the *schliks* or residue of black sands, rich in small particles of gold, are submitted to the further extracting process after the ordinary manner, in a vessel turning horizontally upon its axle.

Besides these sands, there are also auriferous beds in the same districts composed of the quartz rock, supposed by geologists, from its characteristics, to belong to the second series of the existent strata.

The veins of quartz are accompanied by beds of green felspar; but sometimes these disappear, as the operation of extraction proceeds, and sometimes the proportion they bear to the quartz greatly augments.

The extraction of the quartz rock from the ground, is commenced by forming tunnels, such as have been before mentioned, which are begun at the lower extremity of the bed discovered, and carried towards the higher. A cross way is then cut in the mine, in order to separate as much as possible the sterile parts from the richer. Then the rock is brought up by horse machines. After which it is crushed in mills, and then finally submitted to nearly the same process as the sand.

The eastern declivities of the Ural Mountains are rich also in the precious metal platina, which contributes an important item in the sum of the mineral riches of Siberia. This metal is found imbedded in a nearly similar manner to that in which the gold is discovered. The only difference remarked is, that the alluvions that contain platina, are principally formed

of serpentine, more or less decomposed, and of a small proportion of *amphibalite*, and of yet less of quartz. The *schlik* is formed, for the greater part, of iron *chromémagnatié*.

The extraction of the platina from the sterile substances with which it is encumbered, is performed by the same means as that which is employed in the extraction of the gold. The mines of this metal yield about an average of 120 pouds a-year; but there is less certainty in the quantity of their produce than in that of the gold mines.

There is a greatly discouraging feature in the character of the mining hitherto carried on in all parts of Siberia, which is the sensible diminution of the quantity of the precious metals, in a given proportion, in the beds of sand and quartz discovered, and the improbability, as it is thought, of discovering many more. The augmentation of the quantity of gold and platina, which the entire mines have of late years produced, is owing to the increase of the number of the mines in operation.

The gold obtained every day, is dried, cleaned, and, by means of loadstone, entirely disencumbered of the oxide of iron, which it is found to contain; after which, it is weighed, and entered upon the register kept by the superintendent, by whom it is deposited in a chest prepared for the purpose. The gold from all the washings is brought, however, weekly, to the principal office of the works, weighed again, and then placed with that which is already in the depositary.

The general despatch of the produce of the washings to the depôt of the district, commonly takes place every two months during the progress of the operations. When the gold is here delivered, however, it is again weighed, then smelted and reduced to ingots; and twice a-year it is despatched by express caravan to the

mint at St. Petersburg. Here it is coined; and if it b the produce of private mines, it is returned to th proprietors, after a deduction of fifteen and a half pe cent., on account of impost due to the government, a well as for expenses for further purifying the gold, an for the coinage.

The platina is not, as with the gold, reduced to ingot in Siberia, but is transported to St. Petersburg in the state in which it is washed.

We had just arrived, as it will be remembered, in the midst of the operations of the gold-washing, when we turned aside to consider the process by which the gold is obtained. The scene was a very lively one. Some workmen were bringing the prepared sand in barrows, to place upon the inclined tables on either side the building; and upon these, the washers were occupied, standing or kneeling, in performing the immediate operation which finally withdraws the precious metal from its last hiding place. We saw some of the gold, in very small particles, as it became quite disembarrassed from the *schlik*, the most tenacious of the sterile substances with which it is combined; and it appeared to us to be too pure to require the further process of drying and blowing, and the application of the load-stone before it was fit for smelting.

The apparition of the pure gold is interesting to behold for the first time. We cannot help meditating upon the causes of the value of the precious metal, and the uses to which these few grains of it are about to be put. What a multitude of speculations would crowd upon our imagination, if we might entertain them, concerning the employment of this little portion of the precious substance, from its first hour of acquaintance with the light, until the epoch perhaps of some new geological revolution upon the surface of our planet, even after the extinction of our species, when it may return again to

be once more inactive within some future solid rocks, or at the bottom of the sea!

We need not be much at a loss, however, to conjecture the uses of these glittering particles of the reclaimed precious metal while weak mortals possess them. That which was similar to them has been exchanged for kingdoms, has armed warriors whose blood has dyed the ground, enslaved millions, and corrupted many more. Yet has it served to relieve the distressed, built hospitals, and sent forth knowledge to the wild tribes of our species, to the remotest ends of the earth.

We next passed to the extremity of the building, where we found ourselves in the midst of the thumping of the mills and the working of the cylinders in the performance of that portion of the process of obtaining the metals, as above mentioned.

From these scenes, amid the more important and complicated of the works, we were conducted about a verst down the rivulet, which supplies both the water, and the power employed in the works, where, by its banks, we had an opportunity of seeing the re-washing of the sands from an anciently opened auriferous bed. There are here found enormous quantities of sand, which has been washed in an age to which the historic period in relation to Siberia does not reach; but which is sufficient proof that the country has been inhabited since a very remote period. Nevertheless, the process of extracting the gold must then have been very imperfect; for the same sands before washed, now submitted to the process at this time in use, yield as much profit as many of the newly opened beds. Mere temporary sheds were erected here, and the process in the act of performance was simply that of washing upon the inclined tables.

From this we were conducted to the scene of operations upon one of the auriferous beds lately opened.

The bed was of great promise, and thrown open near one of its extremities after the manner above described in cases where the sands are rich and not too deeply buried in the ground; and, as the digging was in operation, we had the opportunity of observing the bed of sand and the substances above it in profile. The upper side of the bed was about thirty feet from the surface of the soil; and, immediately above this, there was a stratum of the same kind of quartz rock which we had seen crushing in the mills.

We returned to Ikaterinburg on the same evening.

## CHAP. XV.

### IKATERINBURG.

French Inhabitants of Ikaterinburg.—Champagne Supper.—Relations of General Moreau.—Une Femme savante.—Criticisms on French and English Poets.—A gay Professor.—Departure.—Aspect of the Country.—Supper with our Friends at the first Village.—Farewell.

THE day after my visit to the gold mines, two French gentlemen, who were residing at Ikaterinburg, called upon my companion from Nijhni Novgorod and myself, to welcome our arrival in Siberia. One of our visitors was a merchant, and the other a professor of the French language. The professor, after a residence of eleven years in several of the principal towns of Russia, and one year at this place, all the time occupied in the practice of his profession, had now determined to try his fortune further in the interior of the country, and was desirous of embracing the opportunity of accompanying us to Tomsk, the town fixed upon by my fellow-traveller for his intended speculations, and by myself as the most convenient place to repose at, until the setting in of the winter. Some difficulty, however, and some scruples arose on our side concerning such an arrangement, on account of our want of any knowledge of the professor. Our calculation concerning the time we should be in performing this journey under the most favourable circumstances, with the continuance of the fine weather, was about a fortnight; travelling both night and day. But in case the rain or snow, which, in spite of present ap-

pearances and the weather we had hitherto enjoyed we knew to be near at hand, should commence before the completion of our journey, it was certain we should be much longer. Thus, we had doubts whether it would be wise to risk our comfort for so long a period by agreeing to take up a stranger, who might turn out an indifferent or worse companion, without at least affording ourselves a little time to consider the several bearings of the matter. We, therefore, put off our determination until the next day; and our visitors left us, after we had promised the merchant, in responding to a polite invitation which he gave us, that we would sup with him and meet his friend at his house the same evening.

When we arrived at the merchant's, in accordance with our engagement, we found, besides the professor, another European, in the person of the merchant's mother, who was residing with her son; and we soon found that we were in company that was as agreeable as it was novel to us, after having been, since we commenced our journey, accustomed to eat and drink with none but Russian peasants. Our supper was quite French, and almost equal to the best to be had at a Parisian *restaurant*. The wines were also French—Lafitte, Burgundy, Champagne. But had it not been for the presence of the lady, who, from the serving up of the *potage* to the cutting up of the *gigot*, asked questions concerning all matters in Europe as we seemed to leave them, and answered many which we put in our turn concerning this part at least of Siberia, our supper throughout its course of dishes would have been as dull as if porter had been our beverage, and beef-steaks our sole viand.

As the evening advanced, however, when our host had yet said little, and the professor nothing, the lady's attention was accidentally diverted from the table and our

discourse, upon which the professor took the opportunity to give us a little piece of very useful and timely information in a whisper to myself aside; and which explained, at the same time, the mystery of two silent Frenchmen over a champagne supper.

"*Monsieur*," said the professor, "*Madame est une savante; elle écrit: elle est belle-sœur du feu général Moreau.*" Thus, we found ourselves accidentally in the good company of a *femme savante*, who was the sister-in-law, and also with the nephew, of the great—but for one act—Moreau; Monsieur Moreau having been some time settled here.

The hint of the professor was the more opportune, that the conversation was just turning to a criticism in the form of a comparative estimate of French and English poetry, when my natural partiality for that of my own country, might have led me to venture remarks that it would not have been very prudent to make in the presence of a *femme savante*. The conversation, however, continued; and I cannot help reporting one opinion expressed by the *savante Française*, while we conversed upon this matter.

Everybody knows the many excellencies of Racine and Corneille, as well as those of other authors who are generally the most eulogised by French critics, whether upon occasions of mere table-talk, like the present, or at times of more grave discourse. But these were not the subjects which drew forth the eulogy or criticism of this *femme savante*.

"The rigour," said she, as the conversation suggested the remark, "by which our great dramatic writers, who are universally admired, have preserved so nicely the rules of the ancients, has only clogged their fine genius. This we may learn from the effects produced by the writings of one who knew the human heart and our

affections, and what was best calculated to impress and refine them, which should be the very object of poetry; better than all the Greek and Roman writers put together, and yet obeyed no such laws."

The attention of all the party was fully alive, as the *femme savante* thus expressed herself. But with myself there was something more than attention; for I thought it very likely that she designed drawing me into an argument upon the comparative merits of the leading poets of France and England, which I should have been glad to escape. Yet I could not conceive for what French author—and I did not suppose that it could be for any other—this eulogy was intended. However, I remembered the hint of the professor, and remained mute during a moment of expectation, which succeeded this speech. After this, the *femme savante* continued, looking me at the same time earnestly in the face, "and that great one, who was a copyist, indeed, but neither of the Greeks nor of the Romans, but of Nature alone, is your Shakspeare."

A change now took place in the spirit of the entertainment. The dishes had already performed their entrances and their exits, and the red wine had been quite abandoned for the champagne, which was drunk by the Franco-Siberians in a manner that would have done credit to Russians. In the meantime, the lady had retired, and the conversation had become general between the natives of the three several nations to which the party belonged. Gradually, however, the professor became so eloquent and entertaining, as to surprise my German friend and myself. Whether it were, that he was naturally gifted with great conversational powers, which had been wholly restrained by the presence of a *femme savante*, or whether there were inspiration in the champagne, we could not tell; but by his good humour and pleasantry, he soon put

beyond doubt all question concerning the advantages or disadvantages to us of having such a companion for the rest of our journey.

Our future companion then, concerning whom I must now make a few further remarks, was a small active man, probably a little on what we ought to hope will be found the right side of fifty-five—that is, a little above it; and, as he grew warm in the subjects of our discourse, his wit bore down all before it. We had old France and young France painted in such lively colours, in all their foibles and whims, that Louis Philippe, in the midst of his *bourgeoise* court, and Henri de Bordeaux, with his Romish priests around him and the symbols of divine right in his hand, might have sat together, and listened without offence to his quick and harmless pleasantries. His amusing caricatures—and it were well if those of the Parisians were like them—shocked no feeling, whether political or moral, and, I may add, national, though my own country was among the number of those upon which his *jeux d'esprit* fell. We were in an instant of time the worst and the best among the nations, the greatest and the least. Yet with such adroitness did he touch our faults—and it must be admitted we have *some*—that it appeared that the worst which were attributed to us, but which it is not necessary to name, could not be removed without risking the overthrow of the great national edifice of political and moral virtue.

In this manner, we passed away this evening and several hours of the night; and before my companion and myself left the hospitable merchant's dwelling, we gladly engaged the professor to accompany us to Tomsk.

We retired to our hotel, in truth, so pleased with our reception, and the agreeable conversation of those whom we had met, that we laughed more than ever at the terrors generally entertained concerning the

journey before us, since we should be in the go company of the professor, which we now thought ou selves so happy in having secured. "The desert befo us," said my German companion, who was also n without a tinge of humour, in spite of the chillin influence of commerce when it engrosses the whol man, "will be a garden in Arabia in such excellen company, and the birches and the spruces of Siberi will be the palms and olives of which you have been talking and regretting the absence during the journey."

Ikaterinburg forms a little break in the journey between Kazan and the interior of Siberia; and it is almost necessary for the traveller to pass a day or two here, as well that he may adjust and re-arrange every thing for entering upon the wide plains before him, where the villages lie far apart, and where he may be sure he can neither replace his vehicle, nor repair any considerable damage it may sustain, as that he may refresh himself by a little change of pursuits or some repose.

We were the more anxious, however, to make our stay here as short as possible, on account of the advance of the season. Rain usually falls, immediately before the setting in of the winter, in such quantity as to retard the traveller, until the ground is frozen, when it is most probable that the snow will have fallen, which will render it necessary for him to exchange his wheeled carriage for a sledge.

The general did not return to Ikaterinburg until we were on the point of departure. I took the opportunity, however, of calling at the government-house as soon as I heard of his arrival; and I was received with much politeness, and invited to dine there that day. But as our arrangements were now all completed, I was not able to accept this invitation.

We were to be accompanied, for the first twenty

versts of our journey, by the French merchant of Ikaterinburg, and by our companion of the last journey, to whose politeness I had been so much indebted during our short stay at this place. All being ready, the two *tarantasses* appeared in the court, and our last fellow-traveller took the professor's place in our carriage, and the two Frenchmen seated themselves in the other.

Our immediate departure upon this new stage of our journey, was very unlike that of my fellow-traveller and myself from Nijhni Novgorod. One would have supposed on that occasion, that we had been launching into the wide ocean in some cockle-shell of a boat, in search of some fabled island; and my fellow-traveller, it will be remembered, was embraced by his friends with a warmth which would not have been much enjoyed by an Englishman.

But here we were nearer the causes of dread to the Russians, which, like moral difficulties with all of us, seem to have a reverse effect to that produced by the prospect of material objects of terror, and grow less instead of greater as we approach them; and, after shaking hands with the landlord, we jumped into our vehicles, and gaily departed.

The country through which we passed during the first hours of our first journey in Siberia, was similar to that between Ikaterinburg and the mines; but the roads or tracks were level, and better, indeed, than any we had passed over since we left Nijhni Novgorod, with the exception of the best in the government of Perm.

At the place at which the party proceeding and the party returning were to separate, there was a small hamlet of free peasants, called Kossoulina. Here we alighted, and entered the court-yard of one of the houses, at the suggestion of the Frenchmen, who now produced a large basket of extra provisions, of a kind which it was easy to discover by some very long-necked

bottles, which were peeping out from the straw in which they were packed.

The good man of the house came out of his door within the court, to offer us the best quarters his dwelling afforded; but as the weather was as clear and serene as it had been long wont to be, we preferred remaining in the open air; and, with the ground for our table, we sat down upon some logs of wood, to partake of our little parting supper.

The Frenchmen now exposed the contents of their basket, in which the solids bore about the same proportion to the liquids, that the pennyworth of bread bore to the quantity of sack in Falstaff's bill at the Boar's Head in Eastcheap. My fellow-traveller from Nijhni Novgorod and myself were both disposed to abstinence; but we were in gay and agreeable company, and upon the first hours of a journey across the dreary steppe before us, and our Anglo-Danish late fellow-traveller and our new Gallic friends proposed toasts to the Sovereign of the country in which we were travelling, to the young Queen, "throned by the West," and to the King of the French; and we could not wholly resist the accompaniments to the loyalty and mirth in which we willingly united. And if we had been before delighted with the sallies of wit of our future fellow-traveller we were certainly no less so on this occasion. There must, however, be a limit to the time of enjoyment snatched by the traveller from the hours that belong to a journey; and before the sun set, the two parties had mounted their vehicles, and they now took their opposite ways.

## CHAP. XVI.

### JOURNEY FROM IKATERINBURG TOWARDS TOMSK.

Remarks on the Natural Features of the Country.—The Races by which Siberia is inhabited.— Conquest of the Country.—Settlement.— Political Division.—The Road.—Aspect of the Country Villages.— Houses of the Peasants.— Agreeable Periods of long Journeys.— Disappointed with the Company of our new Companion.— Rigour of the Climate partially compensated by the Richness of the Soil.— Arrival at Tiumen.—Walk in the Town. — Bazaar.

Before we proceed further into the vast territory which we have now entered, it seems incumbent to make a few brief remarks upon the great natural features of the country, the races by which it is inhabited, its conquest, its settlement, and its present political divisions.

According to the received geographical estimates of the comparative extent of the different districts into which the continents and islands of the globe are divided, the superficies of this portion of the Russian empire exceeds that of all Europe by many thousands of square miles. Nevertheless, Siberia may be considered as in some measure isolated and detached from the rest of the continent of which it forms so considerable a portion; and this, both on account of the character of its boundaries, which are formed for the most part by remarkable mountains and inaccessible coasts, and by the peculiar course of its rivers, which, with the exception of a few inconsiderable streams upon its eastern shores, all fall into the Arctic Sea, beyond the reach of ships at all seasons.

The most remarkable of the natural features of this great country, are its steppes, its rivers, its mountains, and its forests.

We shall err but little, if we divide the entire surface of Siberia, in relation to its general character and aspect, into two parts—the great western steppe, which comprehends about one-third of the whole superficies of the country, and extends from the Ural Mountains to the River Yenessei, and the hilly districts which lie eastward of this steppe, and extend from the Yenessei to the Pacific Ocean. At the same time, the country generally is more level towards the north, and more hilly towards the south, throughout its entire longitudinal extent. It may be considered to consist of an inclined plane, the higher portion of which is formed by the Altai Mountains, which in many parts rise above the line of perpetual snow in these latitudes, while the lower portion terminates upon the sterile and bleak coasts of the Arctic Sea.

Almost the whole of the northern portion of the country, as far as yet explored, is covered with morass land, while the regions of the middle latitudes are composed chiefly of plains and hilly districts, abounding in grass, and in the shrubs and trees of the climate, and those of the southern, in higher lands producing dense and luxuriant forests.

But by far the most remarkable of the natural features of the country are its mighty rivers. From the Altai Mountains, along the whole line of their course, flow innumerable streams, which unite as they proceed towards the north, till they finally compose three of the mightiest of all the rivers that fertilize the earth, and add their thousand blessings to its varied inhabitants. These three grand rivers are, the Ob, which is the most western; the Yenessei, which is the central; and the Lena, which is the most eastern; all of

which, after flowing through long and circuitous courses, at length fall, as above stated, into the Arctic Sea.

Of the mountains of Siberia, the Ural and the Altai ranges, which form the boundaries of the country upon the west and upon the south, are the most remarkable. But to these must be added the Slavonai Girbirge range, which runs nearly parallel with the coasts of the Sea of Ochotsk, and the yet mightier and more magnificent range, which almost composes the grand peninsula of Kamtschatka.

The population of Siberia is rather estimated than ascertained with any degree of exactness, to be about two millions, and is probably composed of a greater variety of nations than is to be found in the same amount of population in any other part of the globe. The number of the nations or tribes, upon the authority of those Russians who have had the amplest opportunities of knowing the state of the country, is said to be no less than twenty-one. But the element into which all the moral qualities of all the native tribes will no doubt ultimately merge, is decidedly Russian. The Russians at present in the country, however, consist merely of merchants, of adventurers, and of exiles of the present day and the descendants of those of an earlier age, and of the officers and civil servants of the government, and some voluntary colonists, bearing together no proportion to the numbers of the aboriginal population.

Of the many native tribes of this country, it will be sufficient for our purpose to enumerate those only which are the most important, and which will fall under our observation as we proceed.

The first of the tribes whose territory we shall pass over, are the Kirgeeze, who occupy the eastern and south-eastern portion of the grand steppe. The next in importance are the Bouriats, who possess an exten-

sive tract of country bordering upon China, in the eastern districts of Siberia. The next to these will be the Yakutes, who occupy the north-eastern territory, as far as the country of that people whom we shall have afterwards more particularly to mention, who remain still unsubdued by the Russian arms. Another remarkable tribe, some of whom we shall also have occasion to see, is the Tungouze. This people are spread over, not only all the northern regions of Siberia, but also over the tracts inhabited by the more settled tribes, across whose territory they pass in their regular migrations, northwards in the spring, and southwards in the autumn, still following the lives of hunters, alike undisturbed by the settled tribes, and unrestrained by the Russians save in the exaction of a small tribute consisting of furs, and called *Yasac*, which is equally paid, indeed, by all the tribes that have not yet advanced the first step towards civilisation, and been admitted to the privileges of Russian subjects.

With respect to the settlement of Siberia, we are informed, that the first people in any way connected with the more enlightened portions of the globe, which penetrated into the country, were unquestionably the Mahommedans of the Turkestan race. But it does not appear that they advanced further than the limits of the great western steppe, or that they even obtained any certain information concerning the regions that lie further towards the east and the north. Such of the annals, however, of the country, as appear the most worthy of credit, relate, that about the year 1580, a band of robbers, led by a Cossack adventurer, who had for some time infested the eastern districts of Russia, having been overcome by the Czar of Moscovy, retreated across the Ural Mountains, and attacked and subdued a portion of the country, which they found in the possession of Gingis Khan, the earlier conqueror of the

native inhabitants. Not long after this expedition, however, the Cossack leader offered his conquest to the Czar, upon condition of an amnesty for his depredations in Russia; and the terms being accepted, the Russians became the masters of the new territory. The Cossacks, nevertheless, pursued their conquests eastward, in the service of the Czar, until their course was arrested by the death of their leader, who was drowned in the River Irtysch in the year 1584.

Some time subsequent to this, small parties of adventurers among the Russians advanced further into the country, and subdued province after province, until they reached the eastern coasts of the continent, in or about the year 1639. The entire country, however, which the Russians now possess, was not subdued until about the year 1658.

The whole of Siberia under the Russians, was formerly comprised within one government, of which Tobolsk was the capital. But the country is now divided into two grand governments, which are called Eastern and Western Siberia; and each of these is divided into several lesser governments. Western Siberia comprises the governments of Omsk, Tobolsk, Tomsk, and Yenessei; and Eastern Siberia those of Irkutsk, Ochotsk, Yakutsk, and that of the great peninsula of Kamtschatka. The present seat of government of Western Siberia is at Omsk, and that of Eastern Siberia at Irkutsk.

The night was fine and clear, and the moon was near the full, as we entered upon the great Siberian steppe. We made our first change at a hamlet inhabited by a few herdsmen, and arrived after midnight at the village of Béleika, where we stopped to make our second change. We made a second supper, also, at this village upon excellent *stchee*, rye bread, and rich cream; and with these, and the free use of the herbaceous beverage

of the Chinese, the Russians, and the English, at least the two more moderate of the party at the last repast succeeded in neutralising the effects of the wines of France, of which we had all made indeed too free use. After this, we returned to our *tarantass*, and again proceeded on our rapid way.

This part of the steppe is still inhabited by the Kirgeeze. Throughout the track, however, over which the traveller passes, there is a continuous line of villages, originating in, and still almost wholly dependent upon, the trade which they facilitate between China and Russia; and these are, for the most part, inhabited by a Russo-Siberian population, formed from the descendants of former exiles and private adventurers, who differ very little in character and manners from the great mass of the population of Russia in Europe, though they are entirely free from the restraint of serfdom, which is not a part of the law of the land in Siberia, as we shall have occasion to see, when some more particular remarks force themselves upon our attention concerning the institutions of the country.

The road continued good, and the country presented every where the same wild and gloomy aspect, with here and there only such little cultivation, and plantations of barley, rye, and oats, as might be necessary to supply the wants of the herdsmen, and travellers and their horses, and some cattle that are raised here, during the time that the snow entirely covers the fallen grass.

Nothing could exceed the serenity and beauty of the first night of our journey upon the great steppe, and, as the moon had risen before the sun set, we had the cheerful certainty, that the ever-welcome satellite must earlier or later in the night, be our companion, and a lamp to light us across the dreary wastes of country before us, until near the end of our journey. The lone orb is as precious to the traveller whose journeys

are by night, as to the navigator, whose trackless path lies across unfrequented seas. If famishing wolves attacked our horses, or threatened ourselves, we could see to shoot them. If robbers of our own species appeared, at least they could not stab in the dark. And as the effects of the wine wholly passed away, even the Frenchman appeared to become contemplative; and we sat and silently enjoyed the beauty of the night, until, weary with the fatigues of the preceding day, we all reclined upon our convenient couches, and fell sound asleep.

Upon the second day of our journey, as the morning dawned, we came to a small village; and as we had to change horses here, we alighted to take our accustomed tea. All the herdsmen, which comprehended the entire population of the place, were, with the exception of a few old men, tending their cattle at a distance. But we had no difficulty in procuring horses; and after we had refreshed ourselves, we took a little leisure stroll, and occupied our time in examining the houses and premises, like architects in search of new ideas, and in making such remarks as we were able, upon the manner of life of the inhabitants of the great steppe.

The houses here are constructed of wood, and usually of logs laid upon one another, over which rises a high roof, similar to that of the houses of the villages in Russia. Those between the two extremes, in regard to dimensions and accommodation, of which the one where we now breakfasted was a fair example, are of one story, and consist of two rooms, and a loft partially floored, which forms the common sleeping apartment. They are generally in the form of a long square, and have gable ends facing the road, and a door in the court or waste space which separates the buildings indeed of every class, in the Russian or Siberian villages, from one another. In the centre of the house stands a mass of

brickwork, occupying a large portion of the interior, and containing the stove and oven. Upon the side of the door there is a small hall, the object of which is to admit of a second door, to prevent the penetration of the cold into the apartments when the outer door is opened in the winter. From this, another door leads on either side to a distinct room; and upon the opposite side of the house, there is sometimes a passage between the principal apartments, and sometimes a small room entered from one of the larger.

In one of the two principal rooms is the oven, in which the fire is made in the same manner as in those of our bake-houses. In this everything is cooked, and all the heat is produced which warms the house. The heat which proceeds from it, indeed, is sometimes so great, in consequence of the disproportion between the size of the brickwork in which it is set, and of the apartments, that at this season we often found it beyond endurance. But the opportunity will occur again to speak of this remarkable contrivance for warming the houses, after we have experienced its advantages at the colder season. In the warmest weather, however, the cooking is generally done out of doors, where we were several times, even now, obliged to take our meals, in consequence of the heat within. The other of the two larger rooms in houses of this construction, is generally reserved for the conductors of caravans, and merchants and others, whom the peasants furnish with horses.

Each of these two rooms has either one or two small windows, with one pane in each, which in this part of Siberia is sometimes of glass and sometimes of talc. Of moveable furniture, they usually contain no more than some benches, which are placed round the walls, and a table, which stands in one of the corners, and is commonly reserved for the use of strangers.

Such of the houses as are superior to these, are

generally found in the villages at which the government has post stations. They are built after the same plan, but have three rooms or four, formed by dividing one or both of the ordinary apartments of the house. But the houses differing in the scale downwards in dimensions and conveniences, have but one very small room, which is sometimes a mere hovel, with a chimney and oven in the centre.

It had been colder during the past night, than at any time since we crossed the mountains; but, after the sun rose, the temperature of the atmosphere was not lower than during the average of October days in England; and the weather was as fine as that which we had hitherto enjoyed.

I have remarked, after many sea-voyages, whether impelled by wind or by vapour, that with most travellers, the first two or three days that we are on ship-board, and the last two or three, are the least tedious or the most agreeable. No doubt, in the first of these instances, this is the effect of the change which we experience in our daily pursuits and habits, which is oftener perhaps than all of us will allow, a source of positive pleasure. In the second instance, there can be little doubt that the relief or pleasure which we experience, arises from the approach of the moment at which we anticipate the termination of a voyage perhaps long become monotonous and wearisome. But, notwithstanding the greater number and variety of incidents which attend long journeys by land, in comparison with those ordinarily experienced at sea, even in such countries as that in which we are now travelling, I believe that the spirits are in both cases affected at the same periods in precisely the same manner.

Under these impressions, it has been my custom upon protracted journeys to divide them into certain different portions according to attendant circumstances, and not

in time and distance merely, but in relation to all that regards the remembrance of the past and the anticipation of the future. Accordingly, it will have been perceived, that a distinct journey was regarded as commencing at Nijhni Novgorod, and was ended at Kazan, where we first entered the ancient Tatar portion of the empire; and that another journey began with our departure from that city, and terminated at the summit of the mountains, where we bade farewell to Russia in Europe, to enter the wide expanse of country now before us, and in which Tomsk is the limit of our present anticipations.

By adopting this plan, those who travel in countries disagreeable to pass through, will certainly diminish the pain they must encounter, and those who pass through countries where the very act of travelling is agreeable, will as certainly augment their pleasures. But what may be also of some importance, those who write accounts of long journeys may, by adopting the same plan in the relation of continuous incidents, proportionably relieve the tediousness that must attend unbroken narration.

My German friend and myself were, at this period of our travels, in the spirits that quite accorded with the supposition of our now commencing a new journey. But such was the state of dejection in which we found our new fellow-traveller, that we were, at first, apprehensive that he was suffering from positive sickness; and when we found, upon alighting this morning from the *tarantass*, that this was not the case, we were the more surprised to see one who was but yesterday so gay and full of humour, appear now at our cheerful morning meal, with a countenance as gloomy as that of a snow-housed Esquimaux. Instead, indeed, of finding we had made any addition to the sources of our enjoyments by the society of our new travelling companion,

we seemed to have condemned ourselves to the company of one whom champagne alone could raise to the level of ordinary good humour. Thus, if little mention be further made of the third person in our *tarantass* during this journey, it will be because we found no champagne upon the road, without which our professor seemed quite incapable of making even such remarks as those with which most sojourners of no more than a few months in a foreign land are able to entertain those newly arrived, without the necessity of so much as a glass of *quass*.

As we continued our journey, the sun rose directly before us; and, as the day advanced, not a vapour nor the smallest cloud stained the fair face of heaven; and the cool air of the past night was soon succeeded by a comfortable degree of genial warmth.

Nothing, indeed, seemed wanting to fill us with content, and to enable us in imagination to convert the unpeopled wastes of Siberia into the smiling vales of some southern land.

Our common mother, Nature, is said to compensate every where with one hand, what she more sparingly bestows with the other. If we consider impartially her bounty and her parsimony, regarding the blessings she has vouchsafed, with the deprivations with which she has accompanied them in this part of Siberia, we shall find no exception to this law.

Climate and soil are, no doubt, among the natural causes which favour or restrain the advance of civilisation, and modify and form the distinctions of character among the varieties of our species. In the country through which we are now passing, although in the same parallel of latitude as Moscow, the snow lies upon the ground, or the earth remains frozen, for between seven or eight months in the year, and the labours incident to the rural economy practised by the in-

habitants, are usually suspended for about nine months. Yet is this disadvantage in climate in a wonderful degree compensated, and its effects modified, by the earth's extreme fertility. The soil is here composed of a fine black mould, and very probably, as subsequent observation of similar soils, the origin of which could not be questioned, has induced me to think, of decomposed volcanic matter. Such, indeed, are the fertilizing qualities of this soil and their durability, that the composts, or the use in any way of stable or any other manure is here unknown, although rye, barley, and oats, are cultivated in more than sufficient quantities for the consumption of the inhabitants. In the meantime, the surface of the ground is covered with a wild, coarse, long grass, which affords ample provision for herds of cattle during the year. In the summer they graze upon it at large, and fatten; and during the winter, they subsist upon the fallen grass of the past summer, which they rake from beneath the snow, where it lies withered in great abundance throughout the plains.

We took our accustomed dinner to-day of *stchee*, eggs, milk, and tea, at the village of Pilaésa.

As far as we had yet proceeded, the villages through which we passed, were inhabited by the descendants of ancient Russian exiles and colonists. Here and there, however, we saw some huts, which we learned belonged to the Kirgeeze, some of which people we had seen at Nijhni Novgorod. The Kirgeeze are a nomadic tribe, inhabiting this part of Siberia, but none of whom we had yet seen in their proper country.

Early upon the third day of our journey, we arrived at the district town of Tiumen.

Tiumen is situated within the government of Tobolsk, upon the River Tiura, which falls, with the waters of several other streams, into the Irtysch, which is one of

the branches of the great River Ob. It is a kind of domestic Nijhni Novgorod. Lying directly in the highway of the great commercial intercourse of the Russian empire in Europe and Asia, it has become the chief commercial depôt for all that portion of Western Siberia which is watered by the Ob and its numerous tributaries, even to Tomsk.

As we drove into the caravansary of the town, my enterprising commercial companion found the waggons which he had despatched from Kazan during our detention there, which relieved him from some anxiety that he had experienced concerning their safety.

As we were to remain here a few hours, we took the occasion, which was the first that had offered since we left Ikaterinburg, of thoroughly cleansing ourselves from the dust and dirt which our persons, our beds, and all that belonged to us had imbibed. Our conveniences for washing, though not very elegant, were very suitable to our condition. They consisted of tubs filled with water, and set by the side of a fresh well, though this was in the midst of the caravansary, and of all the noise and confusion caused by several hundred horses of some caravans just arrived, with the half-wild drivers which accompanied them.

The first of duties, and so agreeable to perform, being accomplished, we sat down to a meal, similar to that of which we had been accustomed to partake among the peasants, with the addition of an ample supply of river fish, of a kind which much resembled the sterlet in appearance, though inferior to that fish in size and in flavour.

After our meal, we walked out to take a view of the town. Tiumen has its upper and lower town, like the site of the celebrated fair. The two parts are separated by a deep fissure or ravine, which seemed like the bed of an ancient river, and over which has been

thrown a bridge. The caravansary is situated in the lower town, which appeared to be inhabited chiefly by a very poor and dirty set of people. But in the upper town there is a *gostinnoi dvor*, in the stalls of which are to be found everything that belongs to the particular commerce of the town. This mart of retail trade is situated at the top of the rise, in the upper town, with its principal stalls upon the public way. An inspection of the chief articles exhibited for sale here did not impress us favourably with the character of the domestic life of the inhabitants of the Siberian towns; nor did the company we met with, give us a very cheering prospect of what we might expect to find as we advanced into the country. There was little for sale above the coarsest goods of Russian manufacture. And the thoroughfares along the lines of stalls facing the road, were filled with the most ruffianly-looking set of rascals that we had any where seen. We heard, however, that we had not a fair specimen of the Siberians of the towns before us, those we saw being chiefly inhabitants of some of the purely penal villages in the vicinity, who were accustomed to seek employment here at this season.

## CHAP. XVII.

JOURNEY FROM IKATERINBURG TOWARDS TOMSK — *continued.*

Departure from Tiumen.— Character of the Roads.— Aspect of the Country.— Extreme Fertility of the Soil.— Burning of a Loaded Waggon.—The Kirgeeze.—Their Personal Appearance. — Origin.— Women.— Hospitality — Mode of Life.— Their Warlike Disposition.— Leave-taking.— Desert Country.— A Siberian Genius.—A Painted Chamber.—Beating a *Yemstchik.* —Passage of the River Irtysch.— A Forest.

We left Tiumen early in the evening of the 12th of the month, and now entered upon a plain, where the uniformity of the scene which presented itself to us on all sides was only occasionally relieved by small patches of stunted birch trees and a few dwarf firs. But as the day drew towards a close, the contemplation of the azure above our heads, as it gradually changed to the deeper shades of the evening sky, well compensated for the absence of every thing to attract attention amidst the dreary wastes around.

The approach of night was never more beautiful. As the sun was about to set, the moon, now at the full, was just rising above the dark line of the horizon which bounded the view towards the opposite quarter of heaven. Not a cloud, nor the thinnest vapour, obstructed a ray of the brighter orb, as he gradually approached his setting, nor of the softer light of the satellite about to reign alone in the firmament. And shortly after the sun had disappeared, we had, quite unexpectedly, the satisfaction of witnessing a lunar eclipse; for we had not observed in our calendars that

this gratifying phenomenon, which stands in the same relation to science that miracles stand to religion, was to take place at this time.

We had not had, since we crossed the mountains, any just reason to complain of the condition of the roads, which may be said to depend at all times in all parts of Siberia upon the season and the state of the weather, both of which had been in our favour. The summer roads, in fact, are formed merely by the passage of wheeled carriages, and lie often through high or withered and fallen grass, where mere tracks have been made by the necessary deviations of carriages from the direct way, on account of the condition of the ground during the prevalence of the rains in autumn and spring. Every difficulty on this account, however, which attends the traveller in Siberia, is confined to these two seasons. The drought which hardens the ways in summer for wheel carriages, and the snow which enables the sledges to run in winter, have almost equally advantageous effects. The Russian Government, too, has not been inattentive to the necessities of the traveller; and sign-posts have been placed upon the grand thoroughfare at convenient intervals, without which it would be sometimes difficult to find the tracks in summer, and they could never be discovered after the first fall of snow in winter.

The country around us, after quitting Tiumen, was more dreary than usual, until the first morning opened, when we found ourselves rapidly passing by large groves of young and fresh birches and spruces, set at intervals, and resembling what are called in Canada woods of "second growth," by which is meant, the young forests which are succeeding those that have been destroyed by fire, or by the axe of the woodman, and where the ground has been left to reproduce its abundance, which Nature never fails to determine shall

the trees of a different species from those which preceded them. The high and strong grass, too, every where indicated the extreme fertility of the soil. In the afternoon of this day, we passed several small villages, at the distance of twenty-five and thirty-five versts apart; and, wherever the ground was exposed, we found the soil, which, since we left Ikaterinburg, we had observed every where to be of a dark colour and of an open texture, now composed of a perfectly black and fine mould.

There was a very little cultivation about these villages; but spots of ground at intervals gave the stranger the idea of there having been formerly much more. All, however, that we could learn on this subject was, that this part of the country had at one time been more thickly populated by the Kirgeeze, and had abounded more in herds of wild cattle, which, as the commerce with the trans-Ural countries had increased, had been driven into the more remote districts, or were much diminished in number.

On the morning of the third day after leaving Tiumen, we passed over a country similar to that through which our track lay during the early part of the preceding day, and we had a view of several lakes upon our right hand. In the middle of the day, we dined at a small village called Burona, and in the evening we supped at that of Abatskaia.

At Abatskaia there are two fairs held annually, each of which lasts eight days. One of them commences upon the 11th of July, which is near the earliest period of the dry season to be depended upon, and the other upon the 18th of January, when the snow roads are sure to be good. There was a little neat church here, painted, and forming the prettiest object as a building that we had seen since we crossed the mountains.

On the fourth day of our journey we dined at

Tiukalinsk. Here we heard of the burning by accident of a loaded carriage on its way from Nijhni Novgorod to Omsk. The vehicle, as we were informed, while driving at a rapid rate, had caught fire from the friction of the wheels, and been consumed in a few minutes with fine goods valued at 30,000 rubles. Whatever might have been the cause of this accident, it is certain that it was not the want of grease; for we found even bear's grease every where so plentiful, that the peasants, sometimes at a single village, bedaubed our axle with as much of this precious article of the toilet in Western Europe, as would have supplied a perfumer's shop for a year.

On the fifth day, we made our first acquaintance with the Kirgeeze race upon their own domain. Early in the afternoon, we observed several men sitting round a fire near the road, and engaged, as we supposed, in guarding some cattle near at hand, which we did not see; and we stopped and alighted to exchange greetings with them, and gratify our curiosity concerning any traits we might be able to observe in their manner of life.

We perceived, as we approached the party, that they were sitting by a small fire, over which, suspended by three sticks, hung an iron pot. As soon as we came near to them, before any speech was attempted on either side, they made signs, taking for granted that that would be the only means of intercourse between us, to seat ourselves beside them; and we accepted the easily understood invitation, determined at least to see them well, if we could not converse with them. We were not long, however, before we found that one of their party, notwithstanding their resort to dumb-signs, was acquainted with a few words of the Russian tongue; and the use which he made of these greatly aided us in the discourse we now contrived to carry on.

With the personal appearance of the Kirgeeze we were already sufficiently familiar. This people are usually called by the Russians by the simple epithet of Kirgeeze, but sometimes, in reference to their supposed origin, Kirgeeze Cossacks. But if we may judge from the natural traits generally referred to, to govern the judgment in what relates to the varieties in our species, there can be little room for the supposition that they have more Caucasian blood in their constitution, than they may chance to have received at the period of the Cossack conquest of their portion of the country. No two semi-barbarous people inhabiting nearly parallel latitudes, as it seemed to us, could be more dissimilar than these Kirgeeze and the Cossacks. Both, indeed, are rather low in stature, and broad-shouldered and muscular. But in the more distinguishing marks of the races of men, drawn on the features of the face, and written in the expression of the countenance, there seems little common to the two tribes. The countenance of the Cossack is open and lively, and the features of his face are not strongly impressed with the Asiatic traits; whereas the Kirgeeze have the high cheek-bones, and deep-set and rather small eye of the Mongol Tatars, with an expression of countenance that seemed at least to us the very reverse of agreeable. Much less does this pastoral race resemble the well-proportioned, open-featured Western Tatars, whose easy and sometimes elegant manners mark his race to be Turkestan or Caucasian, in spite of a higher cheek-bone than is commonly the trait of the races of that origin. It seems therefore most probable, that the Kirgeeze are of Mongolian descent, like their neighbours the Kalmucs, about whose origin no doubt seems to have arisen. But, if it were discovered to be otherwise, the comparison between the proper Tatars and this race would furnish a practical example of importance to

those who might be engaged in investigating the effects of the moral progress of our species upon the expression of the countenance, and the form of the features of the face. If the Western or Mussulman Tatar be not yet quite in the right road to the right paradise, at least none of the human race are farther removed than all his tribe from the Paganism which is still the moral distinguishing trait of the Kirgeeze.

Our new half-wild friends were dressed as we had seen others of the tribe, in *shoubas* or pelisses of sheep-skins, and caps and mocassins of bullocks' hides. They were unshorn; but they had a very little hair on their faces, in comparison with the abundance with which nature has furnished the Russian race.

We had not proceeded far with the discourse which we were attempting to carry on with these Kirgeeze, when, suddenly, though we did not see a bramble near the spot where we sat that might shelter a hare, appeared before us three women, as withered and as wild in their attire as the weird sisters upon the Scottish heath near Fores; and, before we had time to recover from our surprise at their appearance, two or three young women, and girls and boys, were seen to rise like sprights out of the ground at a few yards' distance from where we were sitting. Upon this we approached the spot from which the last party rose, that we might solve the mystery of the strange apparition; and here we found a hole in the ground that was entered by an inclined plane, and which we learned was the only dwelling and place of refuge of these people as well from the heat of the sun of July, as the winter storms and the piercing winds which at all seasons pass over the wild steppe.

But though the women, by their mysterious and sudden appearance, could not fail to remind an Englishman of the prophetic sisters above mentioned, yet,

instead of being to us omens of evil, they proved the ids for the display of Kirgeeze hospitality.

All the time we were carrying on our difficult discourse, we had perceived that the cauldron was boiling; and as it was about noon, and we had had nothing but our early meal, our appetites were not a little excited by the savoury vapours that proceeded from what was evidently a brave mess of *stchee*, or a stew, at least, of the most substantial component of that famous *potage*. And the women had scarcely arrived, before two of the elder of them removed the cauldron from the fire and placed it on the ground, as if they had come for that purpose, and then retired to their subterraneous abode, with all the rest that had followed them when they appeared.

The men now rose, and in taking their seats around the cauldron, made signals to us to do the same; and the feast began, by one of them handing to one of our party a small wooden bowl attached to a stick about six inches long, and which he had previously dipped in the cauldron and filled with thick rich soup. This being handed about, we did very well, as far as the liquid portion of the mess went, but the more solid portion we were obliged to fish up with our fingers; and, as the soup was very hot, and our fingers were not quite so near fire-proof as those of the Kirgeeze, we were for some time in almost as bad a plight as the fox invited to dine with the crane, into whose dinner vessels he could not thrust his mouth. In time, however, we succeeded in getting enough to be able to pronounce the Kirgeeze mess excellent. Nothing could be more tender and delicious than the beef, which had been slowly stewed with Russian care, which it would be happy for us in England if our cooks would imitate, and wanted nothing of the best *stchee* in the empire, save its ordinary component, and the corrective of its

sometimes too great richness—good cabbage, of which there was none.

When our appetites were well satisfied, we sent our *yemstchik*, who had joined us while we were over the *stchee*, to fetch our chiboocks. In the meantime, we made signs that we should like to see the subterraneous dwellings of our friends; at which all the party rose, and conducted us, without the smallest hesitation, to the place to which the women, after their short visit, had retired.

We now descended by an inclined plane to a cavern which seemed to differ only from that made by the rabbits, in its dimensions, which were in proportion to the larger size of its tenants. We found all the women and children we had before seen, seated upon a carpet of dried grass and skins; and there were hatchets or tomahawks, and some other simple and useful articles lying about upon the ground. But such was the filthiness of the hovel, and consequently our haste to return to the free-air, that we had little time for observation of any thing that might have been more remarkable within it. Such, however, is the mode of living of this semi-barbarous race, who may be said to dwell beneath the ground, save only when, as with many of the wild animals, they are driven from their retreats by the rains in autumn, and the melting of the snow in spring.

Exceptions to this manner of life are, however, to be found among the Kirgeeze, some evidence of which we had already seen at a distance from their native plains. In these cases, they have tents or wigwams, formed of poles spread at the foot and gathered at the top, and in winter, covered with felt made of the hair of the deer and buried several feet in the snow, but with mere twigs or dried grass, to shade them from the sun in summer. Their black cattle and sheep are never put under any shelter whatsoever.

After the hospitality which we had received from these shepherds of the steppe, we could not depart without enjoying a few moments of the pastime of the country, the everlasting chiboock; so we seated ourselves again, and the more willingly, as we were now in the company of the women and the children, who had come up to take in their turn the noon meal.

We had now a better opportunity of making some remarks upon the women. Their dress was very nearly the same as that of the men. Of any peculiar beauty they might have possessed in the eyes of the men of their race, we at least were not sensible. They wore, however, a much gayer air than the men. But this is a trait in the character of their sex, so constantly observed in every condition of society, even to that of absolute slavery, as to seem a universal law of Nature.

Little is known of the proper social life of this people, even by the Russo-Siberians, who trade with them. No doubt it is patriarchal, from the same causes which from the earliest periods of history have, in a greater or less degree, prevailed among the inhabitants of a purely pastoral land. Their disposition is more warlike than that of the greater part of the aborigines of Siberia. They did not submit to the Russian yoke without a sanguinary struggle, and they have often risen again in arms, and carried on war with their conquerors, which has obliged the Government to keep a considerable force of regular troops distributed through a line of forts, which is maintained on this steppe.

Our hosts became very dull as we puffed our chiboocks, and, as we were a little avaricious of our time, we made signs to them of our wish to depart; and, at the same time, we urged with them an exchange of some of our tobacco for some of theirs, which was abominable, merely in order to give them an especial regale after we were gone.

As we took leave of them, we placed our hands upon our hearts, in making such signs of our gratification as we thought most likely to be understood. But though they imitated our example, it was plain that this was not their customary mode of expressing their feelings in taking leave. After this, we remounted our *tarantass* and proceeded on our journey.

Our road during the rest of the day lay across a country the most desolate we had seen, without a shrub or any other herb than the usually abundant wild grass. Towards evening we arrived at a small village amidst this desolation, which did not appear to have an acre of cultivated land attached to it, and which we found inhabited exclusively by herdsmen, save a few possessors of horses kept for the use of the caravans.

We had little expectation of finding any thing here, to relieve a certain weariness with which we were now more than commonly oppressed. Nevertheless, after making our bargain for our horses, we were led into a room belonging to a peasant from whom we had hired them, in which the curious paintings with which it was decorated afforded us all the relief we required; while the conveniences about the apartment seemed to indicate that we were in quarters where we should find a good supper before we returned to our *tarantass*.

The worthy tenant of this cottage had been a soldier, and had been at Paris at the time of the occupation of the French capital by the allied armies; and there, and upon his marches, he had acquired abundance of knowledge, which he determined should not perish with him, or rot unused, while there were any means by which he might disperse his precious stores, and instruct and benefit his present Siberian brethren. He could, however, neither read nor write; but this refined means of conveying and acquiring knowledge, indeed, would have been of no avail, unless others—and

me were yet so learned here—could do the same hus, it seemed to him, that in a country where reading s too high a step in learning for the people to have tained, it would be praiseworthy to teach, by any eans that might be made intelligible; and he thought othing could be more certainly so than painting, of which art he believed he had caught a little of the inspiration necessary to accomplish his ends, in visiting the public galleries of the German and French towns in which he had been quartered.

This was an especially natural suggestion for a Russian peasant. The unschooled, even in St. Petersburg and Moscow, learn by means of paintings what the shops of those cities contain, just as the same classes in our country, a few generations back, were wont to learn the contents of the shops in our towns, or what were the particular trades of the inmates of certain houses, if the barbers' and publicans' signs be, as I believe it is well known, the relics of a former more general custom. In order, then, to carry out his plan, he had first stuccoed the walls of his principal room, and afterwards figured upon their surface some of the more remarkable incidents of his campaigns, with many wonders that he had seen, and also others that he had only heard of, in Europe.

The first object which attracted our particular attention among the paintings, was a gallant ship, well tempest-tossed, upon a rolling sea. This appeared, however, to be among those which the artist had represented either from his recollection of paintings he had seen, or from descriptions, and with the aid of the imagination; for, though he had marched thousands of miles, and passed some time in the capital of one of the maritime nations of Europe, yet had he seen neither a ship nor the sea. The vessel represented was in form very much like the crescent moon, and had three

masts, and was reeling by the force of the wind and the sea, and had at the top of the middle mast, a single sail set, which bore about the same proportion to the hull of the ship, as "a woman's apron," in sea-phrase, bears to a ship's mainsail. She was a man-of-war, too, as appeared from her guns, which were of enormous and disproportionate length, unless the painter instinctively applied the rule of art by which Raffaello places several fishermen of such gigantic stature in a boat that a single one of them would have been sufficient to sink her. This, however, was not the happiest essay of his genius.

The next object represented, that drew our attention, was a palace which resembled the dwelling of a European sovereign in the same particulars as that of King Otho at Athens resembles the buildings of antiquity of which it overlooks the remains; that is, it had length, breadth, and depth, and these all very great.

The next wall we turned towards presented half the quadruped and biped animals of the creation, which were grazing and prowling about in an open and extensive forest. The trees were a little difficult to distinguish in kind. The most remarkable, had the tall straight trunks of pines, with round thick tops, just like the mulberry-trees raised in some countries for feeding silk-worms. The reason of this, however, was accounted for by the facility which it gave of providing ground enough to exhibit the numerous tribes of animals assembled in the forest. Some of these, whether fabulous or real, our zoological knowledge did not enable us to name. The king of beasts was however very distinct; and, though his countenance presented something very much like a laugh, he was in fact tranquilly sitting on his haunches, engaged in contemplating all the various kinds of birds and four-footed animals, his subjects, distributed about the wood. Among the more remarkable of these, we seemed to

observe ostriches, peacocks, camels, asses, monkeys, leopards, tigers, and elephants.

Another wall exhibited a whole garden of trees, bearing large red hearts growing at the extremities of the branches, which the painter informed us he meant as an Allegory, signifying, that the life of man which was figured in the heart, like the fruit of the tree, endured but three seasons. During the first season, he said, we grow like the fruit, during the second, flourish, and early or late in the third, perish. Upon another wall, there were rivers abounding in fish, which the artist had contrived should be seen from the surface to the bottom, by giving the rivers but one bank. By this arrangement, nothing was left to obstruct the view, as well of all the crustaceous and testaceous tribes that lie upon the pebbled beds of the clearer rivers, or wallow in the slime of the thicker, from the crab to the crocodile, as of all the finny tribes that divide the running waters of the transparent streams.

There were also representations of the sun and the moon, and of many stars, and of clouds, and rain, and sunshine, and a rainbow; and there were celestial beings, as well as terrestrial, as various in form as those of the ancient mythology. And neither Alexander nor the present Sovereign of Russia was forgotten.

Before we left this village, we heard, that not Russo-Siberians alone, but many of the men of the native tribes had come hundreds if not thousands of versts to see the wonders of this painted chamber, and to receive instruction from its gifted tenant.

The next morning a little farce which occurred, served to vary the ordinary monotony of the way. I was awakened about sun-rise by loud complaints of the merchant against our *yemstchik* whom he had discovered, by questioning him, was taking us the longer, by four or five hours, of two routes of which he had

had his choice, to attain the next village. After scolding for a time, the merchant proceeded to blows; but as they were in continental fashion, with the open hand, they were quite harmless, except in respect to their moral effect, upon which score the good peasant was not very sensitive. The man, indeed, made no sort of resistance, but complained merely of the hardship of his case, seeing that only a short time since, he had been beaten by a general for taking the shorter route. The general, he said, had found that road so full of ruts and obstacles to the passage of his carriage, that as soon as he discovered that there was another, he proceeded to the same mode of punishing him for not taking the road that he was now beaten for choosing.

About noon on the fifth day after we passed Tiumen, we arrived at the River Irtysch, the largest of all the tributaries, or more properly, of all the great branches of the mighty river of which the main stream is the *Ob*, which is the largest of all the rivers of the ancient continent, if not of the whole world. We found only a small hamlet at the ferry, inhabited by poor and apparently very lazy people, who seemed to be supported by transporting travellers and caravans across the river.

We had heard a great deal from the peasants living at a distance from any of the great rivers, of the famous fish, the *nelmare*, which is peculiar to the rivers of Siberia. But we had not yet tasted this fish, nor, indeed, seen it; and we had for many days determined, if possible, that we would dine upon it when we should reach this river. We were doomed, however, to be disappointed. The cottagers had neither fish, nor nets nor lines to procure them. Nor had they, indeed, even bread or any thing else to supply us with; so that now, for the first time for many days, we were thrown upon our own resources, which the plenty we had lately so generally found had caused us to neglect replenishing.

In answer to our inquiries about the *nelmare* here, we were told that they were so plentiful and so fine in this branch of the Ob, that they were often taken weighing as much as a quarter of a poud, or about nine English pounds, and that the price of one of these at Tobolsk, which lies upon this branch of the great river, was usually about forty copeks, or four pence English.

We found the colour of the waters of the Irtysch partaking of that of the soil upon its shores, which was similar to that of dirty pipe-clay.

The mighty stream which we had now to pass, was a noble object to contemplate, flowing on its silent course from the confines of China towards the Gulf of Obischer, at the distance of about three thousand miles from its source, finally to empty its waters into the Arctic Sea.

The left bank of the river, from which we were to embark, is level, without being low enough to subject the country to inundations; but the shores upon the opposite side are as high as those upon the right bank of the Volga at Nijhni Novgorod, and form steep cliffs. And while we were yet upon the left side of the river, our eyes were once more gratified with the view of a forest, extending up and down, upon the opposite shores, as far as the direction of the stream admitted the view.

The Irtysch appeared here to be something broader than the Rhine at Cologne; and as the craft in which we passed it was necessarily large, that it might accommodate horses and carriages, and as the wind was in the same direction as the current, we were between two and three hours in crossing, although the travellers aided the boatmen with all the exertions in their power, in the efforts they made to overcome the difficulties with which they had to contend.

We found the scene upon the right bank of the river

where we landed, refreshing in the extreme. From the time that we had crossed the mountains, though occasional groves of stunted birches and firs had a little tended to relieve the general monotony of the prospect throughout the steppe, we had seen nothing that resembled a forest, or even so much as a single fir tree, until our eyes eagerly rested upon this dark fir forest from the opposite side of the stream. A road that was cut through the bank of the river, to enable travellers to attain the table level which the land here assumed was steep. When we arrived at its summit, we found the wood composed of the several varieties of the fir tribes, mingled with a few birches, which were, however, very small. But as we proceeded, we observed pine trees towering at intervals above the inferior tribes of firs which covered the ground beneath, and in some instances large enough for the masts of moderate-sized vessels.

There is a great deal of difference in the manner in which this noble species of fir is found growing in Canada, as well as in the countries upon the Baltic Sea, where ships' masts are obtained, and in that in which it grows where it is more thinly sown among the inferior tribes. In the former cases its confinement leads to the very result required for the purposes of navigation, though at the sacrifice of half its beauty and half its claim to our admiration. There, its trunk shoots up a plain straight pole, upon which is set a bushy head, which serves but to show the unsightly disproportion between its spiry stem and its narrow branches. But here, unrestrained in its free course of growth, as was seen in this instance, the sovereign of the northern forest throws out its enormous branches much lower on the trunk; and, while it seems to shelter the trees of the inferior tribes beneath it, presents a picturesque and beautiful object for the eye to behold.

The welcome wood did not, however, extend above ten or twelve versts from the river's bank. After this, we passed through a country which had evidently been of the same character; but the original forest had been destroyed by the flames, and was succeeded by a poor stunted species of the white birch, rendered the more ugly to look upon by the presence of the old trunks of the pines that formerly flourished, standing wide apart, without a leaf to cover the nakedness of their gaunt and skeleton frames.

Before this day closed, we had left all traces of the noble wood far behind, and we were advancing into a country similar to that over which we had been travelling, with little exception, ever since we passed the mountains; and, weary from the fatigue which the difficulties that had attended our passage of the river occasioned, we all fell asleep.

## CHAP. XVIII.

JOURNEY FROM IKATERINBURG TOWARDS TOMSK — *continued.*

Effects of external Causes upon our Visions at Night.— Magnificent Spectacle exhibited by the Hoar Frost on the Steppe at Sunrise.— A filthy Cottage.— Effects of the Advent of a young Pope in a Siberian Village.— Peculiar Method of crossing a River.— Improvement in the Face of the Country.— Geese.— Habits of these Birds.— Ruffians at a Village.—A new Fellow-traveller.— Accident to our Carriage.

At the close of the last chapter, the travellers were left sleeping; and, as their sleep and their awaking were accompanied on this occasion by circumstances which seemed to confirm some observations that I thought I had before been able to make, concerning the influence of external objects upon the character of our visions of the night, I shall here state both what I had on other occasions seemed to observe, and what we certainly now experienced. And if we reflect, that the greater part of the human race pass about one-third of their lives in sleep, it cannot but be admitted, that whatever may by possibility throw the smallest light upon the condition of the mind during that large portion of our existence, though it might only appear to aid us in making our slumbers as refreshing as possible, ought not to be passed over unnoticed by the least observant among us.

Many times after sleeping in the dark, I have remembered, upon awaking and recalling my dreams, that they had been full of indistinct visions, and very confused; and I have equally remembered upon awaking,

after sleeping where a little light only could reach the eye-lids, that every thing that the restless fancy had then presented, was more clearly seen, and also, that whatever the understanding had then striven to grapple with, had seemed to be more easily overcome: but I have remembered also, upon awaking, after sleeping in a glare of light, that my visions had been as indistinct, through the seeming excess of light in the false regions in which the imagination had been wandering, as they had seemed to be from the opposite cause, when sleeping in total darkness. Besides this, I have seemed to observe that the nights passed sleeping in the dim light, always excepting those which have succeeded excess, whether of indulgence or of fatigue of either mind or body, have been both physically and mentally more refreshing than those passed sleeping in the darkness, or in the full glare of lamps or of the day. Indeed, after a night of sound sleep and clear visions, I have often felt much the same relief from the tiresome monotony of every-day pursuits, that attends change from the town to the country, or from the country to the town. In this instance, however, not only did my own visions both of the night and of the morning, and their effects after awaking, afford a remarkable confirmation of the justness of the observations I had previously made, but I had the gratification to find that both my fellow-travellers, who were necessarily exposed to the influence of the same external circumstances, awoke after similar visions to those which my own fancy had presented, to feel the same mental and physical effects that myself experienced. Thus I shall, though in as few words as possible, report what myself, at least, seemed to see during the dim light of the moon and stars in the night, and upon the approach of the brighter light of the sun in the morning, and what I am sure I saw and felt after awaking.

During the proper hours of the night, I seemed, as I slept, to float upon another Irtysch, whose silent banks and pine forests appeared converted into the seats of music and song, which resounded through such groves as might be formed by the olive and the sycamore, and the palm and the pomegranate, and wanted only exemption from the change, that we cannot but remember must come, to equal one of those blissful regions which poets write of, but which travellers never find. Gradually, however, the soft and harmonious sounds that had prevailed, grew confused and harsh, and the fresh groves became so full of light, that the eye could not without pain regard them, until, with the effort to recover the placid state of body and mind which the light seemed to have disturbed, I awoke.

Upon now opening my eyes, I found a scene before them, which with the recollection of the state of the light before we fell asleep, confirmed the causes both of the agreeable and clear visions of the early portion of the night, and of the indistinct and confused scenes which succeeded them. The dim light of the moon and stars, which had shone through the first hours of our slumber, had passed away, and the full glare of day, as our faces were turned towards the east, was directly before us.

This morning was also among the more remarkable of those of our journey, on account of the magnificence of the spectacle which it presented to us. There was not a tree nor a shrub to be seen above the wastes of grass that appeared on all sides around, to make the least break in the uniformity of the plain. A hoar frost covered the whole surface of the ground; and although the sun, when we opened our eyes, had not yet appeared above the horizon, the sparkling element, which sat upon every blade of grass, reflected the rays of the beautiful Aurora from the silvery bed of the wide

plain. But as the sun approached the horizon, the face of the grassy steppe yet increased in splendour, and the scene in interest. As we cast our eyes around, without encountering a single object to obstruct the vision, it seemed as if we were gliding across an illuminated crystal plain. But as the bright orb began to appear above the line of the horizon, the chaste silvery scene gradually changed into golden hues, until the full reflection of his beams presented us with a spectacle too bright to behold. Even the dull professor was moved by this most touching exhibition of nature.

Long after the bright orb "had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn," and the spangled carpet of the plain had disappeared, and the ground recovered its wonted green, the same unbroken horizon appeared around. The first object that we saw above the level of the plain, looked like a distant vessel, wending her way across the waste of waters within Neptune's domain. It was a single tree, that braved the solitude of the steppe, and, bent by the winter tempests, appeared to the eye of the travellers like a ship under canvass in a stiff gale.

It was already late in the forenoon before we arrived at the first village at which we were to change. The place consisted of a wretched collection of hovels, to which there appeared to be no cultivated land attached; and the inhabitants we learned chiefly lived, as in most of the villages of this class along the road, by supplying the caravans with horses. There seemed, indeed, to be much rivalry in this proper business of the place; for the peasant with whom we made our arrangements for horses, had galloped out to the distance of a verst, to meet us on our approach, and several others, a little less diligent, met us and offered their horses before we entered the village. When we drew up at the dwelling

of the peasant that was to supply our wants, we observed the neatest damsel at the door, of any that we had hitherto seen among this class of the people, which gave us more than common expectation of the comfort and the viands we might find within. But our disappointment was very great when we entered. We found ourselves, indeed, in the midst of so much filth, that we determined on refusing to take any thing, and were about to retire, when the damsel that had excited our hopes, came in, and now by her manners and dress so much attracted our curiosity concerning herself, as to induce us to delay our departure, and call at least for the *samovar*.

It seemed as if such an incongruity as was apparent between the neatness of this peasant girl and the filth of the dwelling, must have some reason that would interest us to hear. Thus, whilst our tea was preparing, and the maiden was now blowing up the fire to heat the *samovar* without doors, we engaged the rest within the house in a little chit-chat, which led to an explanation of the seeming anomaly.

Some observations have been already made upon the advantages enjoyed by the priests of the Russian Church, in being permitted to contract the most important of all the social ties, and some remarks also upon the moral effects of this canon of the Church put in comparison with the restraints of the Romish Church. The Russian priest or pope has indeed, in some instances, even a peculiar advantage, in the preference which his addresses receive above those of other men, on account of his incapacity, in case of the loss of his wife, to marry again, which the ladies judge, and no doubt with reason, will render him doubly careful of a possession which, if lost, he has it not in his power to replace. Now, it happened at this time that a young pope, of a Siberian family, had lately arrived at the

village from one of the universities of Russia, and wanted only the qualification of marriage to receive his ordination. Thus his advent had been an alarum to a rivalry among the maidens of the place, which had led to a study of dress and manners, of which we saw a sample in the person of the village belle before us. We did not, indeed, see any of the rivals of our fair young acquaintance; but we thought the pope would be fortunate if he selected the only aspirant we did see. Though full grown, she was not more than sixteen years of age. Her hair was neatly braided and parted in front, and she wore a gown of European manufacture; and although she had no stockings, she had shoes, and certainly town-made. Nature, too, to delicate features, had added a decidedly graceful person, and there was nothing in the slightest degree grotesque in the appearance of her dress, which must have been the effect of the same garments worn by any of those around her. And, as little reserve was shown by the inmates of the house in expressing to us, while the maiden was not present, their hopes at least, of having a pope in the family, we were not able to avoid, when she afterwards waited upon us, expressing our hopes also, of seeing her, when we might return, the aid and support of one who would have twice the interest of an ordinary husband in her preservation. This communication of our good wishes seemed, however, to take the maiden by surprise. The colour came in her cheeks, and she was full of confusion. But while this revealed her thoughts to us, it gave us the grateful assurance, that the spark of nature burns in the solitudes of Siberia as well as in the saloons where the belles and beaux of the European cities assemble.

There were the families of three generations in this house, which is quite a common circumstance in the country. But the contrast between the appearance of

the fair maid adorned for the conquest of a pope, and the sad condition of the rest of the women, was not greater than that between the filth of the piggery they inhabited, and the abundance of its larder. It was strange, indeed, to see such excess of uncleanness dwelling in company with plenty; to see naked children, like young pigs, wallowing among dirty straw and filth of their own making, where there were hanging great pieces of beef, both fresh and smoked, and cabbages and carrots in abundance. It seemed to indicate that the condition of the people was a part of their inherent character, and not to be changed without the presence of many more popes than have yet ventured to settle in this part of Siberia. Such, indeed, was our disgust at what we beheld, that we failed even in our attempt to refresh ourselves with some tea after it was made; and, fasting, we departed.

Early in the afternoon of this day, we passed a small river, which falls into the Irtysch at Omsk. The method by which we crossed its stream was novel to us. We first drove with our carriages directly into a large boat from the platform which united the road with the boat's gunwale. A rope which passed across the river, was then rove through a stancheon which rose about four feet above the deck of the boat; and, as soon as we were embarked, half a dozen hands began to tug at the rope; and they pulled lustily, until the boat, which advanced steadily, made her way to the opposite shore. The boat herself, too, was a curiosity. She was in form hexagonal, with the four side angles obtuse, and the angles at the extremities either right angles or slightly acute.

We saw several flocks of geese to-day, passing from the north towards the different lakes which were visible at short distances from the road, upon our right, in their annual migration at the approach of winter. Late

in the afternoon we arrived at another village with such appetites as to disregard all niceness. And finding the rarely wanting *stchee* ready cooked, with the addition of some excellent rye bread, we made amends for the disappointment of the morning by a hearty meal.

The next day we breakfasted at the small district town of Kainsk. We made no stay here, however, owing to the same cause that had hitherto induced us to press on,—the advance of the season, and the probability of our being stopped by the heavy rains which usually precede the setting in of the winter, and render the roads impassable, until the frost is confirmed and the snow has fallen.

The country had now much changed its aspect. Broad lakes lay stretched out upon our right hand, grass of a finer quality than we had before observed, covered the ground, and groves of birches refreshed our sight, at almost regular intervals of three or four versts. The groves were set so perfectly distinct from one another, as to present the appearance of artificial plantations upon a grand scale. We seemed now, too, to be quite in the paradise of wild geese. We saw large flocks coming from the same quarter as those of the day before, alight on the lakes, and in several places we observed still greater numbers feeding, where the grass was shortest, in the intervals between the birch groves.

I had chanced to have opportunities before of observing the habits of the geese in North America, in the manner in which they provide for their security against any approaching enemy, whilst feeding, on their passage towards the south before the setting in of winter, and in a more particular manner still, when resting and sleeping, as they are wont to do, on the edge of the ice when it is breaking up, as they are proceeding north-

wards in the spring; and we had an occasion here of witnessing the same remarkable effects of the high order of instinct which these animals possess, in spite of our simile of a goose for a booby.

In the country above mentioned, I happened to reside where the windows of my apartment looked upon an open bay, which was frozen over during the winter. Here in the spring, as the weather broke, the current, which was rapid, always first opened a long channel, upon both sides of which the ice usually remained intact for several weeks. I have passed hours together here, watching with a telescope a number of geese sitting at the edge of the ice by the running stream, sometimes all sleeping with their heads under their wings, save two of the number, which always remained upon the watch. Their universal practice was to form a line, at each extremity of which, at about a dozen yards from the rest of the birds, stood one of the two geese that were watching, with his neck always erect. The flock would thus sit, sometimes basking in the sun or sleeping, for hours together, during which, while there was no cause of alarm, there would be hardly a motion perceptible among them, save at intervals of about half an hour, but sometimes more frequently, when the watchers were now relieved almost as methodically as the sentinels of the outposts of an army. When this took place, a single goose at each of the extremities of the line (whether called to his duty by the watcher before him or not, it was impossible to ascertain) roused himself, and marched to take his turn to watch, and was met always half-way by the sentinel he was about to replace. It was not possible to ascertain whether there were any particular watchers, or whether all the birds took their turn. But it was distinctly observable, that when there was any cause of alarm, such as a log or a branch of a tree

floating down the stream, the birds nearest the sentinels were the first that rose up, and were the first that slept again when the alarm seemed past. But when any thing appeared that was sufficiently alarming to put the whole to flight, the first that took to the wing was always near the centre of the line. I had also frequent opportunities when in the pursuit of the birds, and while floating down the stream in a canoe, painted white to imitate the ice, or covered with the branches of trees to look like those which the storms or floods frequently throw into the stream, to confirm the observations made from the shore.

The opportunity, however, did not on this journey admit of our making equally close observations concerning the habits of the Asiatic bird; but, as far as it did extend, it seemed to show them to be exactly the same as those of the American. The flocks of geese that we here saw feeding upon the grass, were indeed much more numerous than any that I had seen elsewhere. Sometimes, as far as we could make any estimate of their numbers, there appeared to be between 300 and 500 in a flock; whereas, in North America, there are not generally above a fifth or sixth of that number. But they seemed every where to form equally distinct societies; and, while they were feeding, they were formed in a long line, and appeared to have the same watchers at the ends as the American birds; and when, as was frequently the case, they had placed themselves between two of the woods which have been mentioned as standing at intervals in this part of the country, the extremities of the lines and the watchers were always towards the woods, as if from apprehension of the lurking wolves and foxes which there shelter themselves.

Every one who has been in any country where geese abound, must have observed, that when these birds are in flocks upon the wing, they never fly in an irregular

manner, but constantly form the figure of an acute angle, of which one of the sides is usually much longer than the other. If they are ever indeed seen flying in a straight line, this is only while a change is taking place, which causes the two extremities of their entire line alternately to form the long and the short side of the angle. The manner in which this is done, is by successively changing the leading bird upon the wing, which continually varies what we must call the apex of the angle in its relative distance to the two extremities of the whole line. In the flight of the Siberian bird, we observed the same order and changes as with the American, notwithstanding the enormous length of the lines.

We made one or two attempts to play the part of the wolf or fox, and thereby to provide ourselves with a meal of goose *stchee*, but were not able to get within the range of gun-shot of any of the birds we saw, without more art than time permitted us to practise.

Before noon, we stopped to take our *samovar* at a village called Kargatskaia. As we here observed a church, which had been partially painted, now undergoing repairs, and houses placed with a little more irregularity than usual, the place rather interested us; and we determined at least to pay a visit to the church before we resumed our journey. Our reception here, however, proved to be of too doubtful a character to encourage our putting our intentions into execution; and, as this was the first occasion upon which we met with the slightest inconvenience from the Siberians, it will be as well to relate what occurred in detail.

Our *yemstchik* had driven into the best house in the village; but as soon as our *tarantass* stopped, we found ourselves surrounded by the most ruffianly-look-

ing set of rascals we had seen since we entered the country. This, however, we did not much regard, and we alighted, leaving the *yemstchik* to look after the property in the vehicle, while we entered the peasant's house, not the least doubting that whatever the people of the village might be, sufficient force would be at hand to render open plunder by day, at any rate very improbable.

We were now introduced, and for the first time since we entered the country, into a papered room with a glazed floor, where we seated ourselves to take a little tranquil repose. But while we were over our *samovar*, a fellow dressed in European costume, but in clothes not very new or clean, came to ask us to permit him to make a seat behind our *tarantass*, across the projecting ends of the poles upon which the vehicle was swung, and to accompany us, for the purpose of retracing his steps upon the road by which he had just arrived with a caravan. He had, he stated, left at a village at the distance of thirty or forty versts from that where we now met, not only his pocket book and twenty rubles, but what was of much more importance, his passport, without which he could not proceed any further in the direction in which he was travelling.

Whether to grant this request or not, of course required some consideration. But the man had scarce made it, before our *yemstchik* came in to say, that he strongly recommended our making no delay, as the village was full of vagabonds and rascals from the mines, and that the people of the place were themselves but little better, and there being at present neither police nor *zasidytelle* (petty magistrate) here, it was not safe to remain any longer.

The merchant now began to be anxious about his property in the *tarantass*, which consisted of a box of jewellery purchased at Nijhni Novgorod, and which, as

he stated, was of great value, which induced us to determine upon making no further delay.

When we came out to proceed, we found an augmentation of lookers on; and one or two among them exhibited a disposition to quarrel with us, by uttering expressions of contempt for foreigners.

We, however, now decided at once upon accommodating the stranger like ourselves in the place, for the sake of increasing our force, while we were in such a bad neighbourhood; and the man was soon busily employed in preparing to place himself. We had alighted, without any arms about our persons; but now finding matters wearing this air, we took an occasion before seating ourselves in the *tarantass*, of exhibiting all the weapons we had; and with which, it will be remembered, we were not niggardly provided.

As soon as our new fellow-traveller had arranged his seat, we mounted our vehicle, and drove off; but not without some further ill-language being addressed to us by some of the ruffians.

We found the road, as we left this village, unusually level and good, and the country exhibiting more than its wonted portion of wood. But we were not above two versts upon our journey, before an accident happened to our *tarantass*, and of a character which we thought, after the roads over which we had passed upon the other side of the mountains without any damage, a perfect mystery. We were not even going at an extraordinary pace, when suddenly the axle-tree snapped in the manner it might have done, had the vehicle unexpectedly encountered some direct obstruction to its course. We happened to have every thing with us, however, by way of tools to repair the damage, and, fortunately, in a grove of trees that was near at hand, there were plenty of young birches, which supplied us with the very wood we wanted; so that,

while my fellow-travellers and myself occupied ourselves in disengaging the broken axle from the carriage, our *yemstchik* entered the wood with an axe; and, before we had accomplished our part of the necessary labour, he had felled a tree and moulded a new axle, which he now brought us, nearly ready to receive the iron to attach it to the wheels of the *tarantass*.

During our detention, we were under some expectation of the appearance of some of the ruffians we had left at the village; but we saw no one, and we were soon again on our way.

After trotting on, however, for another verst or two, we found more friction taking place, in consequence of the roughness of our new axletree, than it seemed safe to permit to continue; we therefore caused the vehicle to be stopped; and upon our now alighting to make some provision against this inconvenience, we were surprised to find that our new companion had disappeared. The first thing that suggested itself, was of course, that some accident had deprived us of our recruit for the nonce; but, upon summing up, and balancing all the probabilities arising out of the several circumstances attending our acquaintance with the fellow, we had no doubt that he was leagued with the rogues of the village where we found him, and that he had broken the axletree by means of the poles upon which we were swinging, to allow his friends to come up with us, to effect a concerted scheme of robbery; but that the attempt had failed on account of his companions being deterred from following, by the rather formidable display that we had been able to make of our defensive weapons: and we were subsequently confirmed in this opinion, by accounts we heard of several robberies of detachments of caravans passing through this part of the country. It is here, however, proper to say, that these depredations in Siberia are

not committed by any of the aborigines, or even by the descendants of the earlier exiles, but by the adventurers and criminals from Russia, who have of late years increased in proportion to the increase of the production of the precious metals in the country.

This occurrence was at least a good lesson to us; and trusting we should profit by it we drove merrily on. We dined in the evening at the village of Novozemka.

## CHAP. XIX.

JOURNEY FROM IKATERINBURG TOWARDS TOMSK — *continued.*

Accident to our Carriage.—Striking Aspect of the Steppe.—Compared to the Ocean.—Impression made on the Traveller.—Companions of the winged Species.— Change of Weather.— Scarcity of Horses.— Spoiled Roads.— Difficulties of the Way.—Repairs to our Carriage.—Filthiness of the Peasants.—Rivalry among the Travellers.— Inconvenience occasioned by the Dogs.— Canine Societies. — Gardens. — Stubble Land. — Agrarian Freedom.— Wolves.— The Games and the Character of the Village Boys.

The sun rose, after we awoke the next morning, over the desert plain, with his accustomed brilliancy. The road was still good, and we were proceeding at a rapid pace, when an accident happened to one of the wheels of our vehicle, which, as we were out of the reach of any aid, detained us some time. Fortunately, however, our present *yemstchik* was as good a mechanic as the last; and the wheel was immediately taken off, and the repairs were commenced. In the meantime, as I found I was not able on this occasion to lend any effectual aid in the work, I walked forward to enjoy for once, alone, the freshness and beauty of the autumnal morning.

There was nothing in the prospect around, that varied from that which constantly presented itself to us at the same hour. Nothing was to be seen but the silvery plain, and the red, grey, and blue of the different quarters of the heavens, all blending their colours insensibly with one another, without a cloud or fleeting rack to break the harmony of the view, or a breath of air to disturb the silence that reigned. A mariner would have been reminded of the scene which the ocean

sometimes displays, when not the smallest ripple appears upon the surface of the water to arrest the reflection of the sun's brilliant rays, and not a cloud is seen in the sky. It reminded me of a calm I once experienced within the tropics, when all on board our bark watched anxiously for days for the first "cat's paw," to give us hopes of a breeze.

In both these positions, almost equally, the isolation to which we are exposed seems to leave the mind free to contemplate calmly the two greatest wonders that the creation displays, with more advantage than when we are surrounded by many objects that distract our thoughts or engage our attention—the great globe upon which we tread, and the far greater by which it is enlightened and fertilized. As we walk over the plain, or as we float upon the ocean, when no object breaks the evenness of the curve line of the horizon, the magnitude, the form, and the solidity of the globe which we inhabit, by the less familiar aspect in which they are now seen, than that in which we are accustomed to behold them, doubly impress us with their reality. Nay, often when the sun is rising or setting, whether the horizon which he is approaching or leaving be formed by the ocean or the plain, if we will forget for a moment, the ideas we attach to our familiar expression of the rising and setting sun, and think only of our true relation to the bright orb, and of our rotatory motion, now bringing and now closing the day, we shall seem to observe more plainly the real character of our movement, and almost perceive the onward motion of the waters upon which we float, or of the firm ground upon which we tread.

With such scenes as these before our eyes, the coldest must feel what the poet alone can express. But nothing, perhaps, in a similar position, is more striking than the contrast we are insensibly led to draw, between

the durability of the grander objects of nature before our eyes, and the limited existence of the sentient being that is permitted to contemplate them.

During the morning, we passed another stream in the same manner that we crossed that of the preceding day.

Later in the day, we passed through a country abounding in morass land, and producing coarse high grass in greater quantities than usual. In several places we saw large herds of cattle and flocks of fat-tailed sheep, under the watch of Kirgeeze shepherds. The villages were, however, from twenty to five and twenty versts apart, and the way was unrelieved by any variety in the scene, and more wearisome than ordinary.

I have not yet mentioned the relief which we sometimes found in the dreariest part of the road, from the frequent presence of some of the winged tribes, which are indebted to the capriciousness of the taste, rather than to the humanity of the carnivorous biped man for their civil treatment and their security, where those of a more delicate species would find us no better than wolves in the work of destruction, as well as in appetite to devour what we destroy. Up to this time, we had had the frequent company upon the road of the party-coloured crow, with white body and black head and wings, and sometimes the visits of the magpie, both which birds were as tame as those that must have been seen in the streets of Moscow, by every one who has been in that city. But now the visits of the crow began to be more rare, and those of the magpie more frequent, as if the latter deemed the position of travellers in this part of the country required more of his chattering, to relieve the weariness of the monotonous steppe. This circumstance has been thought worthy of remark, if it were only to show the paucity we found of objects worth taking note of during a great portion of our journey.

Many times when we had gazed for hours upon the unbroken horizon and the even plain, and had nothing novel to expect at the next village at which we were to arrive, the presence of a single bird, as it sometimes happens to the mariner, was as welcome as the return of a friend after long absence.

We had much trouble with the wheels of our carriage during the whole of this day, and our progress was consequently slower than usual. This, indeed, was the cause of some little anxiety to us, as the sky about noon began to exhibit the first symptoms of a change of weather, that had appeared during our journey. Moreover, as the day advanced, a cold wind began to blow from the north-west, and all the ill consequences which could not fail to come in the train of our dreaded enemy the rain, were now imminent.

The threatening signs were not deceptive; and when we alighted at a small village, which we reached immediately before dark, it was raining, with the thermometer at four degrees of heat of Réaumur, and it soon became exceedingly dark. Darkness was, indeed, as great a novelty to us as the rain; for, even when the moon was not above the horizon, we had hitherto received light enough from the stars alone, to travel at all hours, without inconvenience, at full speed.

The peasant at whose house we had stopped as the most likely to supply our wants, had no horses; but while we were engaged over our tea, the *yemstchik* went in search of any he might find in the village. In the meantime, doubts arose whether it were prudent to proceed or halt, at least until the moon, which would rise late in the night, made her appearance. To the inconveniences we were certain of experiencing from the darkness of the night and the wet, we had to add the probabilities of others; for we learned here, that the roads in this part of the country were not so secure

as those, generally, that we had hitherto travelled, on account of the number of the labourers from the mines, who were passing homewards at this season; and that only two or three days ago, several waggons, laden with goods from Nijhni Novgorod, had been despoiled by some of these ruffians upon the very stage which we were about to commence. Nevertheless, the loss of a night at this time might, should the rains properly set in, involve the loss of a fortnight; and as to the robbers, we thought a German, a Frenchman, and an Englishman, ought not to regard tales which, whenever they treat of evils, as we had all travelled far enough to know, are sure to be full of exaggeration. The merchant, however, whose risk was the greatest, whether we encountered robbers, or were seriously delayed, was desired to decide whether we should go or stop. But with all these causes of hesitation, my long fellow-traveller found it difficult to determine. While however we were still drinking our Chinese beverage, suddenly the *yemstchik* entered to inform us that the horses had arrived; and thus the question, as happens sometimes with more important matters, was decided by an occurrence which had no relation to it; and we mounted our *tarantass* and proceeded.

The darkness of the first part of the night, and the mud which we now encountered, and which reached, in particular spots, even up to the horses' knees, caused our progress to be slow. We made, however, two stages during the night, and arrived at a small village soon after sun-rise, without encountering any of the lawless tribe, which, prepared as we were, and out of humour with the weather, the long constancy of which had quite spoiled us, we almost wished might happen, for the sake of some novel adventure.

Here, for the first time, we found a scarcity of horses. This was occasioned by a detachment of a caravan that

had passed by, requiring additional strength to meet the state of the roads, which, we heard, were almost impassable further eastward, on account of rain having fallen in that direction for several days.

After an hour or two's delay, however, we contrived to obtain eight horses, or five more than our ordinary number; and with these we set forward again with all convenient expedition; and it was not long before we found we had had good cause for the precaution we had taken. Nevertheless, the mud, which filled pits upon the road as deep as to the horses' chests, and worse swamps, that occasionally lay across our path, so much delayed us, that it was near mid-day before we reached another village.

We fared at this stage, however, in a manner that made some amends for the weariness which the state of the roads had occasioned us during the first part of the day. Some *stchee* was ready, and was immediately served; and, with the addition of tea and black bread, all of which our good appetites caused to appear more excellent than usual, we made such a hearty meal, as to content even the professor, who, though he had rarely any thing good or bad to say on such occasions, for once declared, that he had dined "*en prince.*"

The rest of the day, and the night which followed, were passed in the same manner as those which preceded them, in making all the efforts in our power, with a continual augmentation of the number of our horses, to obtain the greatest speed possible. Sometimes we were wallowing in the mud, and sometimes galloping over the better portions of the road with unusual speed, to make up for the loss of time which the pits and swamps had occasioned us.

On the twenty-first, we arrived early in the day at the village of Kroutié Laga, with one of our wheels in such a shattered condition that we determined to remain

here until we could get it put into such a state of repair, as would afford us at least a prospect of completing our journey before its entire destruction, which might not only detain us until the snow should fall, but, perhaps, until the great River Ob, the main stream of which we had still to cross, should be frozen over. Fortunately, however, we found a blacksmith here, who had his forge about half a verst out of the village; and in our disabled state, we put our damaged vehicle into his hands, with a *carte blanche* to obtain all the aid of all sorts that he thought proper, just as a sick man who, finding his own endeavours fail in restoring his health, gives himself up to his physician, and all the aids he may think proper to employ. After this, as it was raining, we resolved to take shelter in the house from which we were to be supplied with horses, in trusting at the same time, that we should find at least something to satisfy the most pressing necessities of nature.

Upon entering this house, we found a yet filthier sty than any we had hitherto seen. But as the rain, which was now falling in torrents, rendered the shelter of its roof necessary, there seemed no retreat, and we took our places, as we were wont to do, upon the benches in the holy corner, if it be not profane to apply such a term to any portion of the very dwelling of uncleanness. It was at least the furthest removed from the worst of the filth with which the room abounded. We even asked for the *samovar*, in hopes that we might at any rate take some tea. And as the heat of the room and the odour together were almost insupportable, we opened two little windows that were near the corner we had chosen, and determined to bear patiently what we saw no means of avoiding.

Three travellers, especially when of three different countries, might be often placed in a position which

would beget among them an honourable rivalry, and every one singly might be ambitious of showing the other two that he could best brave danger or endure fatigue, and the cause of their emulation might be very legitimate and worthy of praise. But as we sat together in the corner of this room, and breathed the foul air, and looked upon our own species of all ages, and, as in the other instance, of three generations, confounded with uncleanly animals and amidst vermin, and then looked at one another, it seemed as if the point of honour were reversed; for the question was plainly, which could bear longest and with the least complaint, the degradation that none in such a situation could fail to suffer. Nevertheless, we all stoutly braved it out, until an act of one of the children, too disgusting to describe, started us up together; and we ran to the door, and were determined to take up our quarters among the cattle in the open shed, rather than re-enter this kennel of uncleanness. Happily, however, the rain had now ceased. We therefore first directed our steps toward the forge; and as we here found the smith very busy, and every thing there going on well, instead of entering another hut, we turned in the opposite direction to explore the village.

The village of Kroutié Laga appeared to be larger than the greater part of the villages we had previously seen. It consisted, like nearly all those that we had passed by on both sides of the Ural Mountains, of two rows of houses, placed far apart from one another, with generally enclosed premises between them, and ranged on either side along a broad road. We heard before we left, that it was three, but it was certainly two, versts in length. The day happened to be Sunday, and our first inquiry was for the church. Here we thought we might at least see the people at their prayers, washed or unwashed, without the risk of encountering any thing disgusting. But although the village was larger, and

contained a greater population than many in which we had found churches, it had no holy edifice of any kind, and no resident pope. We, therefore, lounged down the chief thoroughfare, to see whatever else might chance to attract our attention.

It has not yet been mentioned, that ever since we entered Siberia, wherever we stopped, we were assailed and much annoyed by the fierce dogs with which the villages abound, and which rendered it absolutely necessary for us to have our pistols constantly in hand. This was, however, only a precaution against any real danger from these savage animals, by whom strangers have been frequently severely torn; for the law of Russia forbids the discharge of fire-arms, alike in the villages and the towns, and it would have been highly imprudent in us to place ourselves in a position which might have subjected us to the censure of the *zasidytelle*, or have involved us in a dispute with the inhabitants of the village, without the last necessity. Indeed, until this time, threats and the sight of our fire-arms had been sufficient to keep our petty tormentors at a becoming distance, and we bore their snarlings and growlings with patience. But here they were more vicious, or more courageous than usual, and they beset us quite in a body. Nevertheless, the professor, the most prudent of the party, and the best acquainted with the inconveniences that might attend any infraction of the laws of the country, very properly restrained our desire of vengeance, until one of the fiercest of the dogs seized my *schouba*, at the moment that a half-dozen others were ready to second this audacious disregard of human dignity and fire-arms, when, of necessity, I made him a present of the contents of one of my pistols.

I will here mention, also, while speaking of the Siberian dogs, that on another occasion, when quite

unprepared, I was knocked down by one of these large and fierce animals, whose kennel I had approached without hearing or seeing him, until he sprang with his fore-paws against my breast, but without having, fortunately, length of chain enough to effect the further mischief he doubtless intended.

The dog on the present occasion was only wounded; and as he fled, his howling was the signal of an attack of two or three of the other dogs upon himself, which brought on a general canine combat, that led to our obtaining from the peasants that were by, a little account of the social habits of the dogs of at least this particular part of the country.

It appeared, that the dogs here were divided, according to the sections of the village, into societies, which, like those of men, had their periods of peace and war, and that the most frequent cause of their wars, like that of the wars of the "proud biped" whom they were born to obey, yet might not always with advantage imitate, was the trespass of some of the members of one society upon the territories of another, which seldom failed to bring on a general engagement, that often terminated in the death of a hero or two of one party or the other.

It happened on this occasion, that at the moment the boldest of the party that had assailed us, was wounded, although arrayed against the general enemy, his party had passed the bounds that separated them from their nearest neighbours, and the attack upon the wounded dog was but the signal for a grand canine combat. Their strife on this occasion was, however, short; for the peasants now set upon both parties with sticks and staves, and like an umpire army drove each of the belligerents within his own territory: and the only blood that was shed, was of our own spilling.

We did not enter any second house; but we passed

into several of the spacious courts between them, where the peasants were occupied with affairs appertaining to the little husbandry that seemed to be practised among them. We observed that the men were well-dressed, in sheep-skins, and wore boots made of untanned leather and well adapted to tramp in the mud which abounded in their yards, and had fur caps on their heads. But all the women that we saw, whether at work, or at their doors, were bare-footed and had nothing but a chemise, with a short woollen skirt, on their bodies, and a handkerchief about their heads, although the thermometer was now only one degree above the freezing point.

In some instances, where we happened to see more than the ordinary appearance of industry about the houses, we passed across the courts to the cultivated ground behind them. There were no enclosures, except for a few small gardens, in which we observed some cabbages still growing, and so large as to indicate the same richness in the soil which we had hitherto every where found. There were, however, some patches of ploughed land, upon which we saw the stubble of rye and oat crops remaining. We made some inquiries of some peasants that had accompanied us, concerning their agrarian rights; and we learned that the age among them had not yet arrived when such restraihts as attend a definition of particular rights respecting property in land become necessary, and that every one took, cultivated and abandoned at any time the ground that best suited his purpose or his whims.

Some few sheep were grazing around, which, though protected by the dogs during the day, were not here safe from the wolves after dark. Hence they are then driven into the courts, within which the wolves are not able to penetrate without disturbing both dogs and men. The loss of the sheep generally arises from neglect

unpreparening, or from the absence of the dogs during and fierce We heard that dogs were not unfrequently without hearingolves when defending the sheep, yet that fore-paws againser vanquishers even in single combat. tunately, length tween the two species, however, are not mischief he doudogs bark as soon as they discover the wolves, and the wolves know that a still greater enemy to their species is at hand, and slink away. Nevertheless, we heard that, owing to the natural carelessness of the peasants, and the greater cunning of the wolves above that of the dogs, especially where fire-arms, as is the case in most of the villages, are scarce, or the permission to use them rather difficult to obtain, there are a great many sheep, in proportion to the numbers kept, taken off by the wily prowler; as, indeed, we might very well have judged from the frequent instances of his approach to the villages while we were taking our tea in the evening at the peasants' houses.

Our morning's adventures were rather humorously closed. In one of the larger and drier spaces between the houses, we found all the boys of the village assembled and playing at hockey, or a game that nearly resembled the English school-sport known by that name; and, as we were greeted on our appearance by half a dozen of the elder of them with positive politeness, and invited to share in their sport, we did not hesitate a moment to choose the sides we would take; and, putting down a few *copeks* for the stakes, we joined heartily in the juvenile diversion.

The game went merrily on. Our *copeks* and the honour the boys evidently thought we did them, contributed wonderfully to stimulate the energy of their best players. Many of them were but half clothed; but a finer set of youngsters I have rarely seen. When we were at rest between the games, they gathered around us, and asked many questions. One of the elder, upon

whose brow "was writ intelligence," after aski[illegible]m, where question that generally to strangers com[illegible]ppertaining to capitals to any part of the Russian [illegible] practised among every other, "Have you seen the Empe[illegible]ere well-dressed, very apposite remarks. He inquired [illegible]de of untam[illegible] whose perfect knowledge of the [illegible] the mud which naturally led to the supposition that [illegible] subject of the Czar, where we, his companions, c[illegible] from; and being told that we were subjects of other sovereigns, he asked where our countries were, and whether we were Christians or not. Moscow and Tomsk were, however, the only two places about which this boy's curiosity seemed to have been much excited. Of the former, he inquired the number of its inhabitants, churches, forts, walls, gates, and palaces, and he told us all he had heard of Tomsk. All the rest of the boys listened attentively to what passed, and several others among them, who seemed scarcely less remarkable for their intelligence, put other questions, which impressed us generally with a high opinion of the native quickness of the youths of the country; and we regretted that school-masters and artizans were not more liberally distributed among a race that seemed by nature so capable of receiving instruction.

## CHAP. XX.

### JOURNEY FROM IKATERINBURG TO TOMSK —*continued.*

Departure from the Village of Kroutié Laga.—Arrival at the Banks of the Ob.—Delay.—Comfortable Quarters.—The Ob.—Wild Fowl.—Lakes.—Birds.—Duck shot —The Ferry of the Ob.—Laden Waggons.—Passage across.—Woody Banks.—Remains of ancient Forests.—Elevated Land-view.—Condition of the Village of Oiashinskaia.—A Governor travelling.—A cunning Peasant.—The Reward of Patience of Injuries.—Aspect of the Country.—Rich Soil.—Forests.—Undulated Country.—Views.—Tatar Village.—Tatar Merchant's Family.—Rural Affairs.—Cleanliness.—Morals.—Hospitality.—Tatar Villages.—River Tom.—Peculiarity of the Rivers of the old Continent.—Fortunate Discovery.—Passage of the River.—Aspect of Tomsk.—Arrival.

We left the village of Kroutié Laga early in the afternoon, with our carriage, as we trusted, now in a condition to carry us to the end of our journey; and after another night's tedious travelling, during which we changed without alighting at the village of Tirishkina and the small district town of Kolivan, we arrived at the village of Orskoi Bor, upon the immediate banks of the grand branch of the Ob, which bears the proper name of the river: and here we were for a short time delayed, in consequence of further damage to our disabled vehicle, which it was absolutely necessary to repair.

Although we had attained the banks of the Ob, we were still about five versts from the ferry at which we were to cross the stream. But as this was the station at which travellers repose, when the passage of the river is obstructed by the making or the breaking up

of the ice in the autumn or spring, we found a forge, and no want of mechanics, and very good fare, and a clean and comfortable apartment to sit down in to take our meal.

With the exception of the house of the old soldier with its painted chamber, we had not entered a clean apartment since we left Tiumen, and a very few that might be termed exclusively *human* dwellings. We now, too, indulged our good appetites with minds more at ease than usual, partly on account of the comfort of our quarters compared with those to which we had been accustomed, but also because we had gained the banks of the great river, and thus secured our crossing before the ice began to form, from which we had dreaded a long detention. Even the professor seemed now to be awaking from the bear-like slumber in which he had, save at intervals, indulged during the journey thus far. And while the merchant attended to the repairs of the *tarantass*, the Frenchman and myself took a walk along the banks of the river.

The breadth of the stream here appeared to be about double that of the Rhine at Cologne. Its banks were high on both sides, and thickly sown with birch trees of a superior growth to those we had with few exceptions seen since we entered the country. Upon its bosom floated thousands of wild fowl, which we might approach within pistol shot without disturbing; but as there was no canoe at the shore, and we had no dog, we could not have got what we might have shot, and therefore made no attempt wantonly to destroy them. Among them, we noticed the commonly called black-duck, the widgeon, and the sheldrick or diver.

When the repairs of our vehicle were completed, we left the banks of the Ob again, to cross a narrow alluvial plain formed by the serpentine course of the stream. In the midst of this plain, there were several

lakes, near which the road passed, quite covered with wild fowl of the several species which we had seen upon the river. Hundreds were feeding also upon the morass around the lakes. Some were even in company with our constant companions the magpies, which were here more plentiful than ever. We stopped but to make a single discharge of a fowling-piece, which however furnished us with a good dinner for the next day. The report of the piece seemed to disturb only those that were within a few hundred yards of us; but even as these rose chiefly from the water, and in a dense mass, the noise of their wings over the silent wastes of the plain, was like the sound of distant thunder.

We arrived at the ferry of the Ob about two hours before dark; but as several laden carriages from Nijhni Novgorod, on their way to some distant part of the country, had preceded us, and the ferry-boat was on the opposite side of the river, we were not able to embark before an hour after dark.

The night was calm and fine; but such was the strength of the current, that our crossing occupied us half the night. This however is not longer than the average time in which the passage is made; for, unless there happens to be a strong wind against the stream at the time, the boat is commonly carried so far down the river, that upon reaching the opposite shore, she has to be tracked up often for several versts by the united force of the crew, who land for that purpose. To ourselves, however, this delay brought relief. We had not at any time, since we left Ikaterinburg, had an opportunity of sleeping when the carriage was not in motion upon the road, and knowing how long we should be on this occasion without apparent movement, we made ourselves as comfortable as possible in our *tarantass;* and we all slept soundly till the moment the carriage itself again touched the shore.

We found the right bank of the Ob resemble that of the Irtysch. The moon was shining as we ascended the little elevation which led to the table surface of the land; and the dark forests here afforded us the same agreeable relief, that we had experienced from the view of those of the Irtysch after the tiresome sameness of the grassy plain. The wood was, however, here more varied, and the pine more scantily sown among the darker spruces; and the birches were of inferior growth to those upon the corresponding bank of the Irtysch. We found the country too, as we proceeded, slightly undulated.

As we removed from the vicinity of the river, we observed less and less wood; and by the time the day was approaching, we had left the fir forest far behind us, and the country was now partially covered with stunted birches alone. Among these, however, stood the tall trunks of decayed pines, plainly indicating, as in the vicinity of the Irtysch, that the birches were a "second growth," which had succeeded an ancient forest, in which the pine had attained to a size much larger than any we had before seen in Siberia.

Though there had been much rain here, and we found the ground very wet, we met now no obstruction to our ancient rate of travelling; and, as the sun rose with his accustomed unclouded brilliancy, we were full of hope of completing our journey before a late hour the next day. The prospect indeed before us, after the tranquil sleep we had enjoyed during the early part of the night, the return of better weather, and the professor's hopes of champagne, filled us all with the most agreeable anticipations.

Before the sun was two hours high, we obtained from an elevated spot, a view of the village of Oiashinskaia in a valley, and in the midst of a country somewhat more varied in aspect than any we had for a long time seen.

The *yemstchik* had already expressed apprehensions, however, of the difficulties of the road which we had yet to encounter. And when we approached this village, we found ourselves plunged into a bed of stiff mud, through which our horses were unable to draw us, and over which it would have been impossible for us to pass on foot. Some peasants, however, came to our aid; and three or four fresh horses now laboured with our own for a full half-hour before we were enabled to alight at the house of the peasant who had furnished them.

Our first care, as soon as we got out of this complete bog, was about horses to proceed with. Notwithstanding the wretched appearance of the place, we procured eight; and, satisfied with what was far above our utmost expectations upon first seeing the village, we called for the *samovar*, and determined to take our breakfast very leisurely. Our grand object of passing the Ob was accomplished, and we saw no further important obstruction to the remaining portion of our way, and we were not now disposed to suffer any trifling inconveniences to trouble us.

While, however, we were seated, free from care, over our tea, the unpleasant news was brought us, that the civil Governor of Eastern Siberia had unexpectedly arrived, on his way to the seat of his government, Irkutsk, and that his attendants, finding a scarcity of horses, had very unceremoniously seized upon six of the eight we had engaged; and as the professor, our guide and counsellor in all difficulties that regarded the laws and usages of the country, recommended our taking no notice of a proceeding so strange to those less acquainted with the customs existing among this people, we determined to consider ourselves only unfortunate, and bear with patience what we could not remedy. Moreover, the peasant to whom the horses

belonged encouraged us to expect the return of some others that were now upon a journey, at least before night; yet we had little hope that they would be in a condition to set out again, even during all the following day, after the reports we heard of the muddy condition of the roads in the direction from which they were coming. We had some idea, indeed, in the midst of our resignation, of going to the governor, who, we thought, might chance to know nothing of the conduct of his servants, to endeavour to get him, if possible, to share with us all the horses that were to be obtained, in something like a just proportion to the wants of both parties. But his excellency was at the opposite end of the village; and the passage to and fro, without more horses than we now had, was next to impossible; and our prudent adviser still feared, that if we did reach the house at which the governor was breakfasting, in case of ill success, we might get out of temper, and do ourselves more mischief than any we could receive from the becoming patience which he recommended; so we remained uncomplainingly resigned.

We had at least an example of this happy disposition in the patient and ready servants of man, that had brought us so far, and had endured so much; and we kept our seats upon the benches in the corner of the peasant's room, without a hope of being able to quit this miry vale for at least that day.

We had not, however, sulked away an hour, before a peasant arrived, to say that there were now all the horses we wanted at our service, and the very best in the village, and quite fresh, with which we might proceed. This knowing fellow, it appeared, had outwitted the attendants of the governor. He had timely heard of his excellency's approach to the village, which had been some time expected, with three equipages, and he knew very well that all the horses that could be

obtained would be required for the representative of the sovereign to dash through the mud at a pace that would become a man of high rank, and, not caring to expose his horses to such usage, especially for a gage inferior to that which he would receive from the foreigners, he had hid away his best beasts, and had paraded out such as were unfit for the journey, with the air of a loyal subject most forward to aid his sovereign's high officer on his tiresome way.

"I love the Emperor," said the man, with whom we had now some joking about the manner in which he had outwitted the governor's attendants; "but I like my horses better than any of his officers, and I will not risk the loss of them, when a little management may save them."

Thus, our patience had turned our chagrin to real triumph; for we had never better horses than those that were now put into our *tarantass;* and we had the, doubtless pardonable, satisfaction of passing the governor and his retinue, wallowing in the mud within five versts of the village in which we had been left apparently so helpless. It is proper here, however, to say, that our horses not being again seized on this occasion, was a sufficient proof that the governor himself had no share in the piracy.

We dined to-day at a village of the better class named Bolotna. The ground as we proceeded, continued to be slightly undulated, and whether high or low, exhibited the same rich soil of fine black mould, which, except at short intervals, we had observed every where abound since we crossed the mountains. The land was here, indeed, blacker than ever; and the vegetation was unusually abundant. For many versts, the country was covered with such birches as we had so frequently observed of "the second growth," among which were still standing many of the tall and bare

trunks of an ancient forest of pines and other firs, upon which traces of the fire were visible. Those that had flourished here, indeed, had evidently been of a still finer growth than any of which we had before seen the remains, and well attested that the natural capabilities of the land were equal to the production of any thing that the latitude and distance from the ocean might admit.

When we awoke upon the morning of the 24th, we were ascending a hill, and the day was just breaking. As we gained the highest elevation of the ground, the sun was rising directly before us in the same unclouded majesty that, with so few exceptions, we had been accustomed to behold his welcome beams at every return of day. A vast country, and fair to the eye so long fixed upon the scanty vegetation around, or the desert plains, now lay spread out for miles before us in wild grass lands slightly undulated, and partially covered with the darker species of fir. In the midst of the landscape, at intervals, appeared portions of the River Tom, bright with the rays of the sun, and wending its serpentine way through the light-green plains, and the sombre groves which generally covered the more elevated portions of the landscape.

As we descended from this hill, we found the country producing generally stunted firs, thinly sown. There were, however, some groves of birch trees; but these at this season, when their leaves have fallen, do not modify the deeper shades of the fir forest, as in the months of their bloom.

We breakfasted to-day at an early hour at Voruchina: and about mid-day, we arrived at the village of Kaltaiskaia. Kaltaiskaia is a Tatar village, and inhabited almost exclusively by peasants of this race; and we heard from our *yemstchik*, that there was a Tatar merchant residing here, who was always ready

to receive strangers, and who would supply us with horses or obtain them for us, but that the rest of the inhabitants of the village were rather shy with Christians, for want of the habit of mixing among them. We therefore determined to drive up to the dwelling of the good Mussulman merchant.

The houses of the village were differently arranged from those of all the villages we had visited, inhabited by Siberians of Russian descent. They neither stood in a row, nor were placed near each other, but were distributed about the cultivated fields, which we observed were fenced with poles, and in some instances covered with the stubble of rye, barley, and oats. There was a small mosque in the midst of them, prettily situated and painted, and forming an ornament and finish to the village; and we heard that there were also two others; but they were either removed from the centre part of the village, or were not distinguishable, like that which we saw, by the minaret. The whole formed a fair example of the superiority of the Tatar peasant, in sobriety and diligence, over the Russo-Siberian, at least wherever the latter is deprived of the spirit upon which society exists among his race, which is, his religion, and left without a guide to direct his steps, or a model before him to imitate, as it is his fate to be in many of the lone districts of Siberia.

Every thing here indicated such capabilities in the country, as the persevering industry of our North Britons, formed in a colony under their pastors, would in half a century bring to a degree of culture not yet thought of by its present inhabitants.

As we drove up to the Mussulman's house, which was a neat dwelling, placed within a court and a little aside from the road, a smart-looking lass of ten or twelve years of age came out, with her face half-

covered, and though evidently too much pleased to see strangers to have any inclination to retreat, Moslem like, took no notice of our *yemstchik's* demand, if indeed she understood it, whether the good man of the house was at home. The merchant, however, made his appearance before we had time to alight. He was dressed in a similar style to the richer sort of the Arabs of Syria; and with more taste or exactness than the greater part of the Tatars we saw at Kazan, or in any of the villages of Russia. After him, came out three or four children of both sexes, all neatly attired. Then another well-attired Tatar, who we learned was a brother of the merchant, appeared, to greet our arrival; and after all the arrangements were made for horses, and for some repairs to our carriage which it again needed, the merchant invited us to enter his dwelling.

We found every thing as neat and appropriate within the house, as without; and although we did not see what were doubtless its chief ornaments, the wife or wives, and the elder daughters of our Mussulman host, we saw evidences enough of superior comfort in the divans, stools, and materials of the *ménage*, to convince us of the well-regulated lives of its inhabitants. We breakfasted upon sweetmeats and coffee; after which we sat down on the merchant's divans and smoked our chiboocks. It was to myself like a dream of Egypt or Syria, which fair lands now became the subject of our conversation.

The Tatars were in raptures when I informed them that I had visited those countries, and they put many questions to me, concerning what I knew of the Mussulman life there, to which it was highly agreeable to reply, with as faithful descriptions as my experience, reading, and memory, and our means of intercourse through a translation, permitted. Some of the words

too, which I remembered of my never very great stock of the Arabic tongue, acquired while in those countries, happened to be known to them, probably from their occurrence in the scriptural and sacred portion of their language; and these, when pronounced, much delighted them.

We passed about an hour in this too enervating recreation, while a portion of the road and still another river were before us. After this, we returned to the court, where we found the reparations to render our carriage fit for completing the journey unfinished; and, as my companions and all the Tatars now engaged in aiding the work, I set off alone to make a little survey of such parts of the village as were nearest to us.

I passed by several of the farm-houses; and wherever I saw any of their habitants, I made the Arab salaam, used in Egypt, in touching the forehead and the breast with the right hand, and uttering the words "*Es selamo aley koon*" (Peace be with you), which was certainly understood, though I did not comprehend the reply which I received.

All the Tatars here seemed as busily occupied, as if they had been Christian men in our own Britain. One or two that were at their doors, invited me to enter; but as I could not hold any conversation with them, I declined, indicating as well as I was able, that time did not permit my stay. One of the good men, however, who seemed determined that his meaning should not be misinterpreted, brought me out some milk to drink, which was very grateful after the sweets and coffee upon which we had just breakfasted.

All I saw about these rural habitations exhibited the same respect for propriety and cleanliness which had been apparent at the merchant's. There were to be seen, indeed, indications of that happiness which it has been so justly said is oftener found in the retired dwellings

competence and content, than amid the splendour of the court, or the turmoil of populous cities. And I will take this occasion to say, that no one could travel thus far, and hear and see all that fell under our observation concerning the lives and condition of the inhabitants of these Tatar villages, and compare them with the condition and state of morals generally, in even the better sort of villages inhabited by the Russo-Siberians, without regretting the inferior success of the popes to that of the Mussulman *imaams* in their lessons for enforcing attention to cleanliness and all the accompanying decencies of life, as well as in implanting those virtues which are so essential to the peace and security and proper conduct of the family life.

On my return to the merchant's dwelling, I found every thing ready, and we now took a hearty leave of our Tatar friends, and departed.

Soon after leaving this village, we had a view again of the River Tom from a slightly elevated portion of the land, which was now generally plain. We passed two other Tatar villages during the morning, in each of which there was a mosque; but we did not make any stay at either of them. We observed, however, the same cheerful air, with equal indications of industry and propriety prevailing among their inhabitants, that had so much attracted our attention at the village at which we breakfasted; and the same stubble land, so refreshing to the eye from its rarity, also appeared wherever the mosque was to be seen.

As we drew near the Tom, we found the land plain and low; but on reaching the ferry, we observed the same characteristic trait of high banks upon the right side of the river, though in a less degree than we had observed at the Irtysch and the Ob.

It is perhaps worthy of remark, that there seems a tendency in the rivers of the old continent to flow by

high banks upon the right hand. Besides what we were now observing in these great rivers of Siberia, as we passed them by, we had before perceived to be a characteristic of the Oka at Nijhni Novgorod, and of the Volga nearly as far as we followed its banks, from the site of the great emporium of merchandise to the passage of the river near Kazan. The same inclination, it will be remembered, is to be seen even throughout the course of our own Thames from London to its mouth most remarkably, but also above London, as visitors to Richmond must have observed.

On our arrival at the ferry of the Tom, we found the boat on the opposite side of the river, and several of the waggons of a caravan waiting to embark on her return. This threatened to give us a long detention: but a slight circumstance to which we were indebted to the Russian fondness for the Chinese beverage, favoured us, and obtained for us the preference over the loaded waggons. Thus, while the professor and myself were regretting the great delay we thought we were here to experience, our merchant and the master of the ferry most opportunely, not only recalled to their memories, that the law gave the preference to carriages with tea, as a wise provision against the detention and damage of that important article of merchandise, but also, found out that we had enough of the sober plant in our *tarantass* to come within the scope of the happily pliable law; and this was the more surprising, since we were on our journey towards the country from which the tea came, and directly from that to which it is carried. Thus, however, as the boat approached, orders were given to prepare our carriage for embarkation, upon which the conductors of the laden waggons began to contend for the rights to which they considered themselves entitled. But these good men were no doubt unacquainted with the law, and it may be, also, with

the course that the tea travelled; and a very few words sufficed to convince them of our right of preference, and we embarked.

Our passage across the Tom, though this river at this point of its course is about the same breadth as the Volga at Kazan, was easy. Where we landed, there were some Tatar women in their gay, high-coloured dresses, attending fishing nets along the shore; and we heard that they supplied Tomsk with the chief part of the fish consumed there, which they carried to the town in canoes, to be disposed of by the men in the market place.

We found the rays of the sun at the time we landed upon the right bank of the Tom, on the 27th of September, absolutely hot; and notwithstanding the rain, sleet, and even snow, that we had had several days before this, the thermometer was standing at six degrees of heat in the shade.

We now entered our shattered *tarantass* for the last time. There remained but four versts to complete our journey. For the first half of this distance, we passed over a dry soil, that produced small spruce trees, which were thinly scattered. After this, we came upon a narrow alluvious plain, formed by the winding of the river. From this point we obtained the first sight of the place of our repose, the long-looked-for Tomsk, the most famous of all the towns of Western Siberia. It stands partly upon elevated ground, and partly upon the inner portion of a low strip of land that here borders the banks of the Tom; and it now presented to us, quite distinct from our associations of expected rest, a most agreeable object to contemplate.

Upon entering the town, we drove through a street that reminded us of many of the towns we had seen in Russia. The merchant alighted at the house of a brother merchant of Tomsk, and with him also the

professor; and the *yemstchik* drove me to the house of a character well known in Siberia, and who will not escape notice in a future chapter.

Upon closing the account of this long journey, some remarks suggest themselves concerning the nature and qualities of the Siberian horse, and of his treatment and its effects, and also concerning the general results of our observations upon the character of the journey which we had now accomplished.

This tried friend and docile companion of man in every country, is, in Siberia, small in stature, round-barrelled, short-necked, and in this part of the country commonly bay-coloured, and he carries his head low and awkwardly elongated when in motion. He is strong in proportion to his weight, highly tractable, possessed of gentle temper, sportive and full of spirit when not overworked, and patient under sufferings, whether from ill-usage or fatigue. I do not think, indeed, that the Arabian horse, with whose qualities I have had opportunities of becoming acquainted in his own clime, is superior to the Siberian in any thing, except the beautiful symmetry of his form and his riding paces. Yet this our faithful and never treacherous servant, to which both the useful and the fine arts are so greatly indebted, which shares our danger in war, and to which we owe so many of our enjoyments and so much of our wealth, and by which the progress of civilisation itself, wherever it exists, has been advanced, is treated in Siberia (where, indeed, his services are more necessary than in any other country) with the utmost barbarity.

In this rigorous climate, this enduring animal has no more than an open shed to sleep in during the severest weather. Into this he is turned after a journey in winter, as white with the frost as the deer-skin in which his master is clothed, without even straw to lie upon and there fed with a spare quantity of the coarsest food.

Among the more humane portion of the Russians, it is a common saying, that if the transmigration of souls were to be the solution of the question concerning the mysterious future, and they had their choice into what animals they would be transformed, the horse would be the last they would choose, lest they should fall into the hands of a Russian *yemstchik* or *isvoshtchik*.

Russian humanity is never seen, indeed, under greater disadvantages, than in this instance. The Arab is the friend of his horse, which he will see cared for, even though he should want himself. The Russian or Siberian peasant is his severe master, who exacts every grain of his strength by blows accompanied with curses that show an utter want of all sentiment whatever, lodges him badly, or not at all, cares little how he feeds him, and never cleans him or clips a hair of his whole body from the hour of his birth to that of his death.

Some travellers, in Russia at least, I am quite aware, have given a very different account of the treatment of their horses by the *yemstchiks* and *isvoshtchiks*, and spoken of the multitude of gentle words which these drivers address to their animals. But I fear curses indicative of any thing but humanity, have been in many instances mistaken for blessings, or the instances have been exceptions, and probably have occurred when the horses were the sole property of those who drove them. I have known Russians declare, that they have been obliged, and this in Russia Proper, to shut the windows of diligences, on account of the profane and indecent language used by the *yemstchiks* to their horses; and I have heard of this being a subject of amusement to some, and of scandal to other travellers in sledges and other private carriages.

There is one remarkable practice, however, in the treatment of the horse, which is almost universal, and

though apparently the very climax of barbarity, is supposed to be excused by reasons too constantly given to admit of the supposition that they are unfounded, although, perhaps, the nature of the animal has adapted itself to the usage, rather than necessity imposed treatment so unlike any thing heard of elsewhere. It is the custom during a journey, which is always rapid and violent, even though a stage should endure for the entire day, not only to keep the horse the whole time without any food whatsoever, but even to give him nothing for the space of from four to six, and even sometimes twelve hours, after his arrival at the station at which he is to repose. Often, too, he is tied up, and not suffered to lie down during the whole of his long fast.

Whether the practice be justifiable or not, it is certain that it sometimes leads, among such an inconsiderate people as the Siberians, to the most cruel consequences. I shall have, indeed, instances to mention within my own experience, where horses, after fourteen hours of severe travelling, have been left the whole night without food from mere negligence, although the same journey had been performed for several previous days, and the poor animals were obliged to set off again fasting, to labour again for the same number of hours, and perhaps to do the same for several succeeding days.

The journey which we had now completed from Ikaterinburg, the last town at which we slept, or made more than a few hours' stay, to Tomsk, was performed in exactly a fortnight, travelling at all times by day and by night. This may be considered to be about the average number of days that the journey will occupy at the same season; for what we lost by the state of the roads during the last two or three days, was compensated by the aid we had from the moon during the greater part of the time, and the light from the stars during the nights on which we had less of that of the moon, which,

with the few exceptions mentioned, was always sufficient to permit us to travel as rapidly by night as by day.

With regard to the many perils which our friends at Nijhni Novgorod seemed to see us so wantonly court, nothing need be added to the almost daily account that has been given of all we experienced up to this time, when we were at least in the very heart of the dreaded Siberia. The length of this journey was 1800 versts, and our distance from Moscow was now 3525 versts.

## CHAP. XXI.

### TOMSK.

Population.— Position.— Importance.— General Description.— View of the Town from an elevated Point.— Character of its Inhabitants.— Three Orders.— Chinovnik.— Exiles.— Their Classification.— Character.— Treatment.— Colonies.— Remarkable Organisation.— Distinction between Political and Criminal Exiles.— Tatars.

THE departmental town of Tomsk is the capital of the district of the same name, in the great western government of Siberia. It is situated upon the right bank of the River Tom, which is one of the numerous tributaries of the Ob, and, at about twenty or twenty-five versts from the point of junction of the tributary with the main stream of the grand river. It lies in the direct line between the Ural Mountains and the capital of Eastern Siberia, from each of which points it is about equally distant, and, in the vincinity of some of the more productive mineral districts of the country. It is the residence of the governor of the department of which it is the capital, who is usually an officer of engineers, and superintends in an especial manner all the mining operations of the imperial government within the district.

Favoured by these advantages, Tomsk has become in point of wealth and population superior to all the towns in Siberia, except the capital of the grand eastern government. Its population is about 9000; and its wealth is probably greater than that of any town of an equal number of inhabitants in Russia Proper.

The town is built partly upon two hills, separated by a

narrow vale, and partly upon low and even ground, and is divided into nearly two equal parts by a torrent which runs down the vale, and continues its course through the town along the bottom of a deep fissure in the ground, until it falls into the Tom.

This miniature river, upon entering the lower part of the town, makes an elbow, which admits of its banks forming one side of the street that connects the two extremities of the town, and upon the opposite side of which have been built detached houses, overlooking an open space beyond the fissure, upon which stand the *Gostinnoi Dvor*, or Russian Bazaar, and the buildings of a general market-place, and beyond which flows the broad River Tom.

Near the middle of this connecting street, or single line of houses overlooking the space and buildings above mentioned, stands the house in which I was domiciled while at Tomsk. From this point, I set off in company with my fellow-traveller from Nijhni Novgorod, who called upon me for the purpose, upon the morning after our arrival, and under the guidance of a native, to make a first survey of the town.

Turning upon our left hand, we found several large houses, neatly painted, which our guide informed us belonged to wealthy China merchants; and at the distance of less than a quarter of a verst, we came to the proper street, with houses on both sides. Here we found three or four shops in houses standing apart, and stocked with the little necessaries of the household economy, such as our grocers, hardware and earthenware merchants, and some others, divide among them; and there appeared to be nothing wanting of the more ordinary articles of the European *ménage*. In several shops of a superior class, were exposed the more valuable articles of merchandise, such as cloths, furs, cotton and linen goods, among which we found in one

that we entered, which was kept by a Tatar merchant, articles of English, French, and German manufacture, as well as others of the coarser description of Russian goods. The prices, however, of every thing were from three to four times higher than we usually pay for the same articles in the west of Europe. Some were even valued as much as six times higher than the prices of London and Paris.

At the distance of a few hundred yards further, continuing the same street, we mounted the hill upon which stands the portion of the upper town, which is upon this side the ravine or fissure above mentioned. This brought us to the quarter occupied by the more wealthy portion of the inhabitants. The houses here also stand apart from one another. Some are of brick, and several are built after the model of those which are placed in the open parts of Moscow, and were painted with as much taste as is commonly displayed in the exterior decoration of houses in the towns in Russia. Some have walls painted straw-colour, or a faint yellow, and others a pure white, and all have green roofs. They have all, also, their ends fronting the street, and their doors at the side, in a spacious court, and several have gardens behind them.

Upon one side of this portion of the main street, smaller streets lead to a quarter occupied by the dwellings of the artisans and the peasants, and, upon the other side, the backs of the houses which compose the street, approach a precipice which overlooks a portion of the lower town on the opposite side of the dividing stream, which is the Tatar quarter, in the midst of which stands a neatly painted mosque.

After a short survey of this upper quarter, we returned to the centre of the town, and set out again to make a little tour also in the opposite direction.

Having passed over the bridge, to the right side of

we found the main street still proceeding in a direct line for about a verst, and a hill rising on the right hand. At the top of this hill stands a Romish church, provided for the use of the Polish and German part of the population which happen to be of that communion.

The higher portion of this division of the town, which is upon the right side the main street, is occupied by artisans, peasants, miners and exiles; and that part also of the lower portion through which this street runs, is formed of mean dwellings occupied by the same classes.

After turning upon our left hand, immediately upon this side the bridge, and passing the building which represents our town-hall, and leaving the open space, with the market-place and the *gostinnoi dour* before mentioned, upon our left, we entered a street, little inferior in the style of its buildings to that occupied by the wealthier classes upon the opposite side of the town. In this street stands the house of the governor, with several of the houses of other officials; and in inferior streets on either side, are found the same description of dwellings as those of the meanest portions of the rest of the town; and these are inhabited by families of the classes which compose the mass of the population.

After passing nearly to the extremity of the better street, we turned towards the river, facing the banks of which we found an open line of a mean class of houses, between which and the river we continued our walk towards the centre of this side of the town, until we came to the *gostinnoi dour*, into which we now entered. In this establishment, so indispensable in every Russian town, we found all the arrangements similar to those of which a notice has been already made; but the supply

of goods generally, was, as we were prepared to expect, comparatively very scanty, and of an inferior description.

We concluded this little out-door survey of Tomsk by mounting the hill upon which stands the upper portion of the town, as above mentioned, which is on this side the ravine and the valley. From this elevation is obtained the best view of Tomsk. Among the dark edifices, are seen the gay cupolas of six of nine churches of which the town can boast; and in the distance, upon one side, appears the River Tom, upon the opposite banks of which the stunted and dark fir trees of the country are seen very thinly scattered; and in the other direction, appears a slightly undulated country as scantily sown with the same dusky vegetation.

The inhabitants of Tomsk may be divided into three orders, in every one of which are found two or more classes. But that we may in this account of the town properly distinguish the voluntary colonist of every grade from the constrained inhabitants of a penal colony, who are not in a civil sense a part of the population, we shall have to regard the exiles of all orders and grades apart, though we shall find them mingled with all classes of the free population, under regulations which properly distinguish the political from the criminal exiles, and also the degrees of crime which the latter were sent into Siberia to expiate.

The first, then, of the three orders into which we must divide the population, may be considered to comprise all the civil and military authorities, from the governor down to the lowest *chinovnik*, or under civil official.

In the second order, we may place the principals and agents of the mining companies, and the merchants of the several grades, including of course the Tatars, and

ose of all religious faiths, with all who are employed their service.

The third order will then consist of all the artisans, nd the inferior tradesmen and peasants, composed for he most part of the descendants of exiles, and the voluntary colonists for some generations back.

We will now divide the first of the above orders of the population — that is, all the *chinovnik* — into two distinct classes, in the same manner that conventional usages, with but slight variations, divide the same order of the people in all countries.

The first of these, consists of the governor, and the general in command of the troops within the department, whose appointments are usually for a limited term, the *gorodnichii* or chief of the police, the *ispravnik* or judge, the post-master, the agents and engineers in the mining service, the chief architect, and several others whose appointments are permanent or usually endure for a long period.

The second class of the same order of the people may be considered to be composed of all the under *chinovnik* in all the departments superintended by the above-mentioned superior officers. These are generally sent from Russia, after having been selected from among the classes whose attainments do not commonly exceed the acquirements of reading, writing, and the first elements of arithmetic.

In the second order of the people, the sole distinction is, between those engaged in the proper occupations that belong to mining, and those engaged in commerce.

In the third order, the varieties are yet less manifest. Here the artisan, inferior tradesman, and peasant or labourer, are with but few exceptions confounded with one another, by similarity of manners and conduct.

We now come to that important class which form

so considerable a portion of the population of the country. But in order to introduce them in their proper character in this and other towns in Siberia, it is necessary to recur to the circumstances which attended their settlement in the country.

From the time of Peter the Great, exiles have been continually sent from Russia Proper into Siberia. The number which have been sent since that period up to the present time is uncertain; but the number that now annually pass the Ural Mountains is about 10,000, including many of the wives of the exiles, who voluntarily follow the fortunes of their husbands. But owing to the distance, which, save in the case of some who remain in the nearer governments, is not performed in less than two years, many of these never reach their destination; and thus the effective augmentation of the population by this means does not probably exceed 8000 souls a-year.

The exiles are formed into five distinct classes; and every one receives the treatment in the country which is proportionate to the offence to be expiated.

The first class, consists of those who are condemned for the highest crimes and offences against the law of Russia.

The second class comprises all those who are found in a state of vagrancy throughout the country.

The third class consists of those condemned for minor offences against the laws.

The fourth consists of those who are condemned by the courts established in the villages, and for the most part for petty offences.

The fifth class is composed of serfs condemned by the order of the government, upon application from the proprietors of the estates to which they belong.

The exiles, generally, after the passage of the mountains, are distributed through the country, at

various distances from the boundary of the colony, depending upon the character of their offences. Those who are condemned for the highest offences, are usually sent to the eastern provinces, but those who suffer for the lighter, remain in the western.

They now submit to a division into three classes only. Those of the first class are called *katorschniki*. They consist of such as are condemned for life, or for a long period, to work in the mines. They are considered as civilly defunct. Some of the most criminal of these are sent to the silver mines at Nertchinsk, in the government of Irkoutsk. Before the reign of Alexander, criminals of this class laboured for the rest of their lives beneath the ground, where they were at their decease interred; but at the present day their treatment, as we shall hereafter have occasion to see, is very different.

Those of the second class are called *loslannyje na raboto*. They consist of such as are condemned for a shorter period, and designed for colonists upon the expiration of their term of forced labour. These are employed in the service of the government in mere ordinary labour.

Those of the third class are called *loslannyje na poselenye*. They consist of such as are condemned for the lightest offences which incur the penalty of exile. They are considered upon their arrival in the country to have in effect already expiated their faults, and they are at once established by the government as proper colonists. Sometimes they are settled in villages already existing in the vicinity of the towns, and at other times they are placed in villages laid out and built expressly for their reception. They receive, moreover, the government aid in every thing proper for their establishment, even to such a sum of money as is deemed necessary to accomplish that object; and for three years they are free from the taxes levied upon the older colonists.

Almost the only inconveniences, indeed, which these exiles suffer, consist in their confinement to the village in which they are settled, beyond the limits of which they are not permitted to pass the night, and in an interdiction from changing their avocation. They are in effect peasants *glebæ adscripti*, without the conditions of service to which the serfs of Russia Proper are subjected.

But the most remarkable feature in all that regards the settlement of the exiles, is the organisation of the civil affairs of these new villages. At the head of every village is placed a simple soldier, ordinarily a Cossack, who administers justice and punishes all petty offenders, by thrashing them soundly with a stick. Nevertheless, in case of the commission of grave crimes, the administration of the law rests with the court of the nearest town, or is entrusted to the *zasidytelle*, who is here a sort of itinerant magistrate. This state of society, however, does not endure beyond the generation which succeeds that in which it is established. After this, a *starosta* is appointed, by whom justice is administered as in Russia.

It now becomes necessary to mention the important moral distinction in the classification of the exiles, in all that regards their position in the proper society of the places they inhabit, at the different periods of their exile. This consists simply in the different conventional treatment, as well by the government as by the people, of those who have been exiled for state offences, and those who suffer the penalty of any other offences whatsoever. Thus, while the punishment of both is the same in regard to actual settlement, restraint, and civil disabilities, and is proportionate alike to the gravity of the offence against the law; yet, as they become relieved from the first restrictions which follow their arrival, the difference of the position in which they severally stand

relation to the rest of the population, is very great. The criminal exiles remain for life under the moral ban, which neither pardon nor forgetfulness is able wholly to remove; while the political exiles, as soon as the first year or two of their exile removes the restraints which are first imposed in respect to the place of their abode and their confinement, enter, without any moral stain, into the society, wherever it is found, of the same rank as that to which they properly belonged when in their state of freedom in Russia.

Not any of either of these orders of exiles can engage in any trade or handicraft. Their proper avocation is the cultivation of the ground, which they may follow to any extent.

But there are yet other inhabitants of Tomsk, who, though in a civil sense a part of its population, are morally more distinct from the Russo-Siberians, than even the aboriginal inhabitants of the wild desert. This part of the population consists of the Tatars. Their religion has too powerful possession of their minds, to permit them to bend to the accidents of their external relations, any further than is sufficient to enable them to profit by the advantages of civilised government.

## CHAP. XXII.

### TOMSK.

The Governor-general Anosoff.—Government House.—Children.—Reception.—An *Albinos* quondam Englishman.—Remarks concerning the English in Russia.—Russian and English Loyalty.—Impolitic Measure of the Russian Government.—General Domitti.—Interview.—Reception.—*Soirée* at Gospodin Astaschaff's.—Gospojah Astaschaff.—Character of the Entertainment.—St. Petersburg Lady who spoke English.—Curiosity about England.—Exiles.—Supper.—Pressing Invitation.

I FOUND, upon my return to my dwelling, that the hour had nearly arrived at which the Governor-general Anosoff, who at this time administered the government, received those whom duty or inclination brought to wait upon him. I therefore took this first opportunity of presenting myself, which I deemed the more necessary, as I was without introductory letters of any kind to any one in the town. Hearing that the general, like his countrymen generally of his order, was a good linguist, I took with me neither interpreter nor servant of any kind. Passing the guard of honour at the door, and the soldiers in an inner chamber, who take off the upper garments of visitors, I made my wants known to the orderly in attendance, and was shown into an ample hall, where I remained while an announcement was made to his excellency, who was occupied in another chamber, that a stranger was waiting an interview. It appeared that I had rather exceeded punctuality; for a gentleman of the order of the *chinovnik*, as it was easy to see from the orders with which he was decorated, in passing

through the room, as he made his retreat from the presence, informed me, that the governor was not yet quite ready to receive visitors, and that I should have to sit down and wait a little. This was, however, of no importance. My time, which I have never found worth much, was now worth nothing. Besides, I had something to occupy my thoughts with, for I could not avoid speculating upon what the general might think was his duty, considering the circumstances under which I made my appearance.

I could not receive any answer to my letter to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, written at Kazan, before my further advance into the country, and I was therefore not without apprehension of being somewhat closely questioned concerning my objects in the interior of Siberia. Of one thing, however, my experience encouraged me to feel assured, that I should at least meet with politeness. And I had nothing to conceal, my objects being mere curious interest concerning the country and the lives of those that dwelt in it. Thus my business indeed with the governor, apart from the proper respect due to his office, was only to obtain permission to make a convenient sojourn at Tomsk, and to proceed afterwards into Eastern Siberia. Had my position, however, even been that of one waiting the opportunity to enter upon any subject touching his most vital interests, and with the unknown arbiter of his fortunes, my state of suspense would not have been of long duration, nor would any mistrust concerning the character of the governor have even endured till the moment of the interview arrived; for the second-hand of the clock, which was suspended in the hall, had not time to make above three revolutions after I took my seat, before a door opened and a party of romping children both boys and girls, loaded with toys and full of good humour, ran out and began immediately to press

the stranger to join in their sports; which at least indicated that the forthcoming general was an indulgent papa, and it might be concluded almost as certainly, a worthy gentleman.

Unwilling, however, to appear to want the respect which was proper to the occasion, which might be the case, if his excellency, upon entering the room, should find a grown-up stranger turned baby in his reception hall, I declined romping with the children. The elder, however, of the girls, who spoke a little French, and who seemed as if she were accustomed to refusals of the kind, and knew the way to obtain her ends upon such occasions, ran back to the inner room, and after holding a dialogue in her own tongue with some one certainly not a child, which I distinctly heard, but could not of course understand, presently brought back word that her papa would not be able to come out for several minutes, adding, that I must in the meantime play with them. Thus, there seemed no choice about the matter; and as I was not in Windsor Castle or in Downing Street, I gave my consent, and to the great delight of the children joined in their play.

The hall was large and uncarpetted, and a capital place for the purpose; so we trundled hoops and tossed balls, and made almost as much racket as boys are wont to make upon a breaking-up day, and for a full half hour.

At length, while we were engaged in this manner, the general made his appearance, and immediately the children, who seemed to be well under command, notwithstanding they were upon their own play-ground, now retired, and left their grown-up playmate alone in the presence.

As soon as bowings and compliments, the preludes to business between strangers, were over, I made my wants known to the governor in as few words as

possible. His excellency appeared a little surprised at the sudden advent and the demand of a stranger and a foreigner. He began the conversation, however, by some questions concerning the accidents of the journey, and then proceeded to ask others which regarded the future.

The general seemed amused with the account I gave him of the little adventures of the journey, and he did not exhibit any disposition to distrust any thing I said concerning my future objects. On the contrary, after a little consideration, he said he did not at present foresee any obstacle, either to my sojourn at Tomsk, or to the prosecution of my journey towards Eastern Siberia: and, before I took leave, I received from him an invitation to attend his *soirées* and dinners, which were weekly.

Thus, I retired, well pleased with my polite reception, and the unreserved manner of the general, and tolerably assured that there existed no obstacle to my continuing my journey when it should be convenient for me so to do.

It was not my intention to call upon any one else in Tomsk, until I had had the opportunity of meeting the *élite* of the people of the town in the apartments of the governor; but as it unfortunately happened, that the governor's lady was taken seriously ill before her first *soirée*, I remained several days confined to the society of my *quondam* countryman with whom I was lodged, and of whom, as he was rather a remarkable person in the country, I shall now make more particular mention.

It may perhaps be remembered by some who are not extremely young (for it may be above a quarter of a century ago), that there were in London, and I believe living in Holborn, an honest couple who had the good fortune to be blessed with an *albinos* male child, which

was exhibited about that time to the wondering cockneys and country-folks. In this interior town of Siberia, at the present time dwells this prodigy in nature, now a Russian subject, and occupied, instead of ministering to the appetite of the lovers of novelty among the cockneys, in supplying the good people of the country with champagne, and other wines of France.

"Albinos," which is now the only name by which this once Englishman is known, shines in the civil councils of the town, and is esteemed for his general knowledge (for he has been a great reader), as well as for his remarkable attainments as a linguist. I do not know whether men whose skin happens to be whiter than that of other people, and whose eyes are red instead of blue or brown, or any of the other less brilliant colours, are wont usually to possess faculties in any way peculiar: but "Albinos" seemed to me a prodigy in philological acquirements. He spoke six languages with, as I believe, wonderful correctness, but certainly with fluency.

Finding my quondam countryman much esteemed in the country, as well for his character as his abilities, it was gratifying to observe, that neither time, distance, nor the snows of Siberia, had had power to chill the affections that belonged to the Englishman. Commercial transactions, however, in which foreigners are not here upon the same footing in every branch as Russian subjects, had involved a question which threatened his ruin, and had obliged him to change his allegiance — a step rarely taken by our countrymen, — and to become a Russian subject.

I cannot resist here making a remark which the occasion may justify. It has been observed by several writers upon the political and social state of Russia, and I am assured with great truth, that the English are the only foreigners resident in the country who maintain

their allegiance to their sovereign untarnished, even after a long residence, and leave the inheritance intact to their heirs born in the country, and by whom it is sometimes cherished, even to the third generation. To this most commendable perseverance in the natural affection for our country, and the rational loyalty which we acquire at home, and cherish abroad, the above instance was an exception arising from necessity. Now I feel justified in further remarking upon this subject, that it were well for the Russian Government to consider the effects of refusing the full privilege of Russian subjects to foreigners in carrying on their affairs, without the fulfilment of conditions that tend to depreciate the respect for that watchword and powerful alarum in time of danger of every monarchical government worth preserving, and of none more than that of Russia herself —loyalty.

Perhaps there may be this difference between the Russian and English sentiment. With us, our loyalty, no doubt, is our patriotism intelligibly expressed, yet not unmixed with attachment to the sovereign with whom we are united in the sacred bond; whereas, in Russia, the patriotism or nationality of the subject, is probably the overt sign of the affection which he bears to his sovereign. Both at least have the same end and aim.

Now with respect to the immediate effect of this state of the law in Russia upon the Russians themselves, it may be remarked, that the subjects of the empire, but more especially the instructed classes, as well in the interior of the country as in the capitals, respect the actions and opinions of foreigners, though without any diminution of their proper nationality; and every stranger obliged to forsake his allegiance, must consequently present an example of disregard for the institutions of his own country, which at least may

have a tendency to produce the same effects upon those by whom it is witnessed.

Although the government house remained closed, in consequence of the continued illness of the governor's lady, there was no interruption to the usual course of *soirées* at the houses of the rest of the polite inhabitants of the town. The commandant of the troops within the province, the General Domitti, who was residing here, was the second person in importance at Tomsk, and therefore next entitled, by the customs of Russian society, to the complimentary visit of a stranger. When a few days therefore had elapsed, I called at the general's private residence.

After passing the several doors, and the ante-rooms within which all persons of importance are wont to enclose themselves during the rigorous season, and ascending a flight of stairs, I was left in a hall something like that at the government house, while the soldier that had conducted me, carried notice to the general, who was at the time in an inner room, that a stranger was in waiting.

Not a moment elapsed before the general made his appearance, and with outstretched hand, and every indication of hearty welcome, before one word of ceremonious compliment was uttered, led me to his inner apartments. My name, nation, and even countenance, were already well known to him. He was constantly in his droshky, or *sani* (sledge), and I took exercise every day on foot; and, as might be supposed, a stranger could not walk about the streets of Tomsk for several days unobserved. I seemed indeed to have made quite a warm friend in a moment, at the very small cost of a visit. It happened, too, that there was to be, that very evening, a gathering of the leading families of Tomsk, to celebrate the natal day of the lady at the head of the fixed inhabitants of the town; and the general, before

I took my leave, begged that I would accompany him to assist in doing honour to the occasion, and, at the same time, to make the acquaintance of the principal people of the place; to which I very readily assented.

The gallant officer called for me in his *sani* (for the snow was now on the ground, though not yet permanently set), and we drove towards the quarter before mentioned as that in which the more wealthy of the inhabitants of Tomsk reside.

The house which we were about to enter, was that of Gospodin Astaschaff, who is the first of all the wealthy resident proprietors of mines in this part of Siberia. This gentleman is one of a company of six partners, who possess some of the most productive of the mines of the precious metals in the country; and he is, at the same time, the sole proprietor of several entire mines, and is wholly indebted for his riches to his own enterprise and perseverance.

Arrived at Gospodin Astaschaff's dwelling, in the better part of the town, we alighted at a door in the court, and after ascending a broad staircase, came to an ante-room, which we found full of evidences that many of the guests had already arrived. About half a dozen servants were here waiting, and we were quickly disrobed, and shown into the chief apartments of the festivities.

I confess I have seldom been more surprised, and have seldom experienced more agreeable feelings, than at this moment. Accustomed so long to the wretched hovels of the peasants, and to the sort of company that the traveller must expect alone to find in the villages of Siberia, and for many hours of the day to look almost on vacancy, even the moderate degree of comfort I had elsewhere seen, appeared luxury; but the brilliancy, so unexpected, of this apartment, with its moving spectacle, seemed more to resemble what is seen at the *soirées* of

the richer folks at Moscow or St. Petersburg, than any image my fancy had previously drawn of a Siberian entertainment.

The lady of the house advanced to meet us, as I followed the general, and a ceremonious presentation and reception now took place, beneath the surface of which, however, plainly appeared the marks of a sincere welcome.

Gospojah (Mrs.) Astaschaff was a lady of St. Petersburg, as I had been already informed. Gospodin Astaschaff had made a journey to the modern capital a few years before this time, and had married this lady when she was not very long freed from the leading strings of the seminary. The lady was robed on this occasion in due proportion to her station at Tomsk, and, being happily possessed of charms of person, with the elegant manners of the first society at the capital, appeared to great advantage amidst her guests.

We now bowed to the hospitable hostess for the present, and the brilliant world of Tomsk society was before us. We found a suite of rooms all well lighted, and filled with gay company celebrating the day, just in the manner we enjoy ourselves upon grand occasions in the larger towns of Europe, every one according to his or her humour, in the particular room disposed for their favourite amusement. In that which we had first entered, the younger sort were telling steps to the notes of a band; and in the next, sat on soft-cushioned chairs, or reclined upon couches, those who more delighted in ease and conversation; and in the third, which was honoured by the presence of the governor, were playing at several tables those who preferred the little stimulus to thought which cards, chess, and draughts afford: and many of the guests were promenading through the rooms, each sex, according to the mode of the country, apart from the other.

In every room servants were handing about ices and preserves, and a profusion of champagne, all ready poured out in glasses set on large tea-trays.

After we had passed through these rooms, the general's next care was to introduce me to a lady who spoke English, and who had lately arrived from St. Petersburg with her husband Gospodin Doobrova, a medical gentleman in the military service. We soon encountered the young wife, who having heard already that an Englishman had arrived in Tomsk, was prepared for the occasion of practising her English.

As I had not lately heard the sound of my native tongue, which the continentals generally may be said to be only beginning to appreciate, and rarely speak tolerably, that of its very consonants, flowing smoothly from the lips of a well-bred St. Petersburg lady, fell upon my ear like "sounds of sweetest melody;" and there was just enough of foreign accent in this lady's pronunciation, to make the agreeable variation which, when there is deficiency in words, seems to supply their place. To the lady, however, the novelty was yet greater than to myself, as she had come to Siberia almost directly from school, where her teacher had been of her own sex, and she had never conversed with an Englishman before.

Several of the other guests too, who joined our party, listened with curious interest to the tongue, which they now heard spoken for the first time, in which many works were written that they had long ago read in translation, and admired. Questions concerning England and English customs were naturally uppermost among those asked by the lady with whom I conversed. As her reading, which had been all indeed at school (for she had brought no books with her, and they were very rare articles at Tomsk) was not deficient, there was no lack of interesting subjects to converse upon. Like

almost all the foreign ladies with whom I have had opportunities of conversing, she was most curious about Scotland, its hills, dales, lakes, islands, and old castles, from having imbibed more strongly the descriptions in Scott's works, and in those especially where the scenes are chiefly or exclusively laid in that part of Britain, than any thing she had read of the southern part of the island; and yet she did not want a fair knowledge of proper English history.

The general having thus fairly introduced me to the good company of Tomsk, now joined the card-players, and I passed my time very agreeably, among those who preferred the lounging apartment, in interchange of thought with all with whom I was able to converse.

Every one expressed great pleasure in having an Englishman among them, and the hope that I should make some stay in what they called, in spite of the elegance that surrounded us, this desert country.

Among the guests in this gay assemblage of the polite inhabitants of Tomsk, I was surprised to find several of the political exiles, who, it is generally thought in the west of Europe, are all toiling in the mines beneath the surface of the ground. But as opportunities enough will afterwards occur, in which something further must be said of their real condition, it is not now necessary to say more than that although those we met on this occasion were mingled with the rest of the company, a feeling was prevalent among them, whether arising from a delicate sense of propriety in reference to any sentiment they might respect in others, or from depression of spirits with themselves, that induced them, without exception, to refrain from joining in the gayer amusements of the ball-room.

The evening was closed by a supper composed of many delicacies, besides abundance of the most precious wines of Europe, which were certainly enjoyed in a

manner, that if the good wishes of the guests for the lady whose natal day they were celebrating were in proportion to the quantity consumed, of which there could be little doubt, Gospojah Astaschaff had nothing to desire in this particular.

Upon taking leave of the host and hostess, I received a pressing invitation to be their constant guest at such hours as might be most agreeable to myself. After which the general drove me to my quarters, it need not be said, as well satisfied with my introduction to the society of Tomsk, as impressed by the unexpected character of the Siberian entertainment.

## CHAP. XXIII.

### TOMSK.

Visits from some of the Inhabitants of Tomsk.—A remarkable Character in Siberia.—Obtained the Name of Alcibiades.—Visit two Millionnaires.—Employment of Wealth by a Millionnaire at Tomsk.—Grounds laid out in Chinese Style.—Towers.—Pagodas.—Temples.—Tower of Babel.—Bridges.—Conservatories.—Menageries.—Specimens of Siberian Sculpture.—Griffins.—*Soirée* at the House of General Domitti.—Polish Professor of Geology.—Pschybylsky.—His Account of the Altai Mountains.—A French Marquis.—Commanded a Russian Ship at Navarino.—His Opinion of the Cause of the Battle.—Character in general of Siberian *Soirées*.—Domestic Establishments.—Tutor.—Governesses.—Generosity of Gospodin Astaschaff.—A Miser.

On the morning after the gay display at the house of the leading family of Tomsk, I was called upon by Gospodin Philomonoff and Gospodin Garrockhoff, two other proprietors of mines, and next in wealth and consideration to Gospodin Astaschaff among the enterprising and more fortunate of the mining speculators of Western Siberia. I was not at home at the time these gentlemen called. The next day, however, I received a visit from another gentleman, originally of one of the Russo-German provinces, but who had been many years in Siberia, whose acquaintance indeed I had previously made, but who now came expressly to accompany me in the capacity of interpreter, to return the calls of the above-named two gentlemen, with whom my lack of the Russian tongue, and their somewhat deficient knowledge of the French, rendered it impossible for me to converse without assistance.

But as any account of the society of Tomsk, or perhaps of Siberia generally, that should omit mentioning the gentleman who now came to do me this act of kindness, would be deficient in an essential particular, and as I had the good fortune of being well acquainted with him, both here and afterwards further eastward in Siberia, I shall not neglect this first opportunity, of making particular mention of my future friend and frequent companion and guide.

This gentleman is known throughout the circle of his acquaintances, both at Tomsk and in other parts of Siberia, for his many social and amiable qualities, not unmingled with that disposition towards the indulgence of epicurean pleasures, which, scarcely two generations back, would have been considered among ourselves to crown all virtue in the brightest genius and best fellow of the town. He had been educated at one of the capitals of Russia Proper, and he possessed in a high degree the talent so remarkable among the instructed classes in the northern countries of Europe of acquiring languages with surprising facility. He wrote several of the modern tongues correctly, and spoke them fluently; and, although neither rich, nor what might even be called successful in the world of mining speculation with which he was identified, he was so much respected for his manly and open character, and his society was so coveted for his everlasting fund of humour, that the good people of Tomsk had employed all their learning to find, if it were possible, a character in history with whom they might in some sort compare their good companion, and whose name they might give him, in place of that which his ancestors had borne upon the western side of the Ural Mountains. At length, after much research, they alighted upon Alcibiades, to whom they thought their friend, after due allowance

for the difference of times, of countries, and of circumstances, bore the nearest resemblance, and by whose name he was now usually called. As often, therefore, as this gentleman may be mentioned, this name will be used, as being by no means without as good authority as may perhaps be given for most acquired appellations or surnames in any other land.

Accompanied by Alcibiades then, I set off to return the visits of two of the three millionnaires of Tomsk, whose houses I had not yet entered. They both resided in the same street as Gospodin Astaschaff, and in houses only inferior among those in the town, to the dwelling of that wealthy proprietor.

We called first upon Gospodin Philomonoff, from whom I received, as well as from his lady, the accustomed welcome, and general invitation, too warmly and politely given to be supposed, as in some countries, no invitation at all.

We next called upon Gospodin Garrockhoff, from whom, and also from his lady, I received the same reception and polite invitation. This gentleman's house is among those which overhang the cliffs from which the view before mentioned, in speaking of this part of the town, is obtained. All the large houses of the quarter have gardens; but those attached to that of Gospodin Garrockhoff are the most remarkable; and as it was now the end of October and the snow was lying upon the ground, my friend was anxious that I should not miss seeing them before the snow should quite bury every thing, as he considered them a real curiosity in the way of ornamental grounds. He therefore expressed a desire to show them to me, and Gospodin Garrockhoff willingly conducted us to make as good a survey of his plantations as the season permitted. They were certainly curious; and, as an account of them may serve to show the taste and turn of mind of a Siberian mil-

lionnaire, I shall not omit giving a rather minute description of them.

In the rear of this millionnaire's dwelling, we found two buildings in wood, forming stables and carriage houses, and overhanging the terrace before mentioned, and also the gardens. Here we were requested by the proprietor, before we proceeded further, to mount a ladder which conducted to the top of these buildings. Arrived here, we found ourselves upon the turreted battlements of a fancy Gothic tower overhanging the steep. From this elevation, though the view of the town was inferior to that seen from the opposite side of the narrow stream which runs through its different quarters, we overlooked the Tatar quarter of Tomsk, and a noble prospect of the great river, which, after flowing from its sources within the bounds of the Celestial Empire, is seen descending towards the north, through the wild and silent wastes of the surrounding country, in its course towards the Ob, finally to lose itself in the icy sea; and, immediately beneath us, appeared the gardens which we were about to visit.

We next descended the cliff, by a flight of steps, to a grassy slope, which was partially covered with snow, and thence to a walk which ran parallel with the cliff through the grounds, and from which other walks led at various angles to a path, formed upon the edge of a broad and deep natural fissure in the earth, the bottom of which was filled with water.

It is in the ancient capital of Russia, that the traveller in the north of Europe first observes the decided tendency towards what we commonly call the Oriental style in buildings and plantations, and which he will find increase as he proceeds towards the east. The sacred edifices, in particular, of Moscow, recall the dome and minaret of the temples of the worshippers of Allah, and the city gardens, with their ornamental pavilions,

occasionally remind us of our ideas, at least, of the fairy land of Arabia or of China. But it has been reserved to a millionnaire at Tomsk to make, I believe, the first bold step, within the wide dominions of the Czar, towards the introduction of the very Chinese style, in the arrangement of pleasure grounds, and in the character of the edifices to adorn them.

These gardens are about 200 yards in length, and about 100 in breadth, with the longer side parallel with the cliff, upon which the fancy fortress, already mentioned, stands. The deep fissure in the ground, towards which we now descended, lies parallel with the cliff, and divides the gardens into two unequal parts, leaving the broader portion, which consists of more uneven ground than the narrower, upon the inner side. The greater part of the uneven ground falling from the base of the cliff to the walk by the fissure, is planted with the rarer shrubs of the climate. A row of lime trees borders the walk, and a railing, which is ornamental to the gardens, runs along either side of the fissure. The ground on this side is intersected with narrow paths, and has several pavilions placed on the descent, of mixed style of construction, in which the Chinese prevails. Upon a grass plot upon the less elevated portion of the slope, stands a miniature Tower of Babel, that may be ascended after the manner that the generation we have to thank for every head-ache we get in the study of foreign tongues, ascended its memorable prototype. And upon the cliff, ranging with the Gothic towers, there is also a large pavilion, commanding nearly the same view as that seen from the towers, and already mentioned.

There are several contrivances in different parts of the gardens, for the benefit of such of the liberal proprietor's fellow-citizens as prefer healthy amusements in the open air, to cards and worse thieves of time than they are within doors. One of these consists of a pole of about

twelve feet in height, placed in the ground, with an arm projecting from the top, from the end of which hangs a string, to which is attached a ring. The art of the game consists in throwing the ring in the air directly from the pole, with such accurate calculation as to cause it to catch a hook attached to the pole on its recoil. And this play is said to be a source of great diversion, and certainly must be an innocent one, to the summer visitors to the gardens.

But the most characteristic objects in the grounds, and those which give them chiefly the air and style of the Eastern country above named, are two perfect pagodas, one of which stands at each of the outer angles of the grounds. From the pointed corners of the two-fold or three-fold roofs of these, hang glass bells, which are light enough to be moved by the least motion of the air, which they fill with Æolian sounds, that contrast to great advantage with the discord made by the abominable thumping of the Russian church bells.

Three bridges pass over the fissure, one at each end, and one in the middle. Those at the ends are merely for the convenience of crossing from one side of the gardens to the other; but that in the middle forms the base of a tastefully decorated building, in the same style as the rest, and reaching from side to side of the fissure, and containing a saloon in which the proprietor of the grounds holds his *soirées*, and gives balls in the summer-time. We entered this supra-aquatic edifice; but it was now shorn of its summer decorations, and as silent and gloomy as the desert.

The banks upon the outer side of the fissure, instead of being a rugged steep like the ground upon the inner side, form a slope, which is laid out in shrubberies more regularly planted than those upon the opposite side. Here also stands a pavilion in the same style as the rest, tastefully painted, and with windows of stained

glass, and containing a small library. From this, which is the most elegant of the fancy buildings, steps descend to the water at the bottom of the fissure, which was still not frozen. At the foot of the steps a beautiful Chinese boat was now lying afloat; and several fine black swans were seen sailing from bank to bank upon the still water, from which they were prevented from escaping by fenders of trellis work beneath the bridges, at the ends of the gardens.

After we had visited these mere objects of fancy, we were led to inspect some buildings and objects of a different character, among which were even four or five conservatories, and a menagerie. The contents of the conservatories deserve particular notice.

The collection of exotics was, indeed, such as would not have been a discredit to many of our ancient towns in Europe. Here, the myrtle, the fig-tree, the vine, the orange, the pine-apple, and the aloes, with the apple and pear, equally exotic in Siberia, were flourishing side by side; and, under the care of a Siberian gardener, they had attained as near approaches to the perfection of their nature, as they commonly attain in any other land of which they are not natives. At the larger of the buildings, a young pine-tree stood on either side of each of the doors without, like sentinels ready to resist the entrance of the great enemy Cold, within the asylum of the delicate strangers from more genial regions. Trees also of the same species, stood by the same doors within. These reached the glass roof, which they seemed about to force up, as if indignant at their imprisonment in their own clime.

The most remarkable in quality of all the fruits of the conservatories, were the pine-apples. About twenty of these, among several hundreds growing, were in a forward state, and several quite ripe; and Gospodin Garrockhoff informed us, that he commonly gathered

two or three a week, which my friend informed me sufficed to garnish the table at nearly all the *soirées* in the town.

The zoological department was not yet sufficiently advanced to afford the means of much amusement or study. The building for the reception of its future animate specimens now indeed contained only one enormous owl.

In the middle of the space in front of these buildings, just as we see sometimes in our pleasure-grounds, were placed a dial and compass upon the same stand, with a little brass cannon, which the sun, by means of burning glasses, discharged at noon.

After we had inspected all these objects, the proprietor led us along one of the paths upon the slopes on the broader side of the garden, till we came in sight of some specimens of Siberian sculpture which I had not before perceived, placed in favourable positions for effect. But here a little mistake occurred, which my friend and interpreter perceiving, rather maliciously promoted, by keeping a little in the rear, while the proprietor and myself conversed together as well as we could without having a good knowledge of a common tongue. As we proceeded, stopping at intervals to conduct our difficult discourse, some three or four semblances of animals were seen couched apart from one another among the dry grass and herbage that appeared above the snow that already covered the ground. Whether it were owing to any likeness they really bore to an animal in its animate condition, for which I mistook them, or that I was confounded by the character of the place, or that my mind was full of any other matter, it at least suggested itself to me the moment that I saw them, that they were some of the amphibious and wary tribe that sit and whine plaintively upon the ice in the frozen sea, and which had been

brought here for the menagerie, or to form the contrast between the plants of the torrid and the animals of the frozen zone, and had become tame, and were suffered to ramble about as they pleased; and I remarked, that I never saw any of the species so tame before. Gospodin Garrockhoff, perceiving immediately the mistake, at least as far as regarded the difference between stone and flesh and blood, and delighted with the apparent success of the artist in his imitation of nature, jocosely determined to keep me as long as possible in error; and he now observed, that he had heard that the animals generally, whether belonging or not to the properly domesticated tribes, were not so tame in other countries as in Siberia. To this, I answered, that I thought this disposition to tameness which he had observed here, would apply to all countries where the number of our own species was greatly disproportionate to the extent of territory which they inhabited, and that probably it was the immediate result of circumstances, rather than of any variation in the nature of the animals themselves. I believed, indeed, I added, that the disposition of most animals which we keep for food or for labour, was modified in proportion to our treatment of them, which was, necessarily, at all times more familiar, and often more humane, where we were ourselves less numerous; and that they generally received the contrary treatment from us, with contrary effects, where we were in the greatest numbers ourselves. I informed him, also, in proof of this, that it was certain that almost all the animals upon the American continent, in those latitudes at least where the climate resembles that of the country in which we now were, were observed to be as tame in their natural state, and, when domesticated, to possess the same docile disposition and aptitude to associate with, or receive the yoke of, their human masters, as those of

Siberia. I remarked, however, as we proceeded, that I never before saw any of this tribe so tame as these. "It is very strange," said the proprietor; "they are the tamest stock we have." But we were not yet even speaking of the same animal. "In Canada," I then said, as we approached still nearer to the objects of our conversation, "we should not have arrived within double this distance of them, before they would have rolled themselves down the bank, and jumped into the stream and disappeared." "This is still stranger," said the worthy proprietor, who was too much wrapt in his ecstasy at the success of the Siberian artist whom he patronised, in deceiving a European, to perceive that my error was two-fold; "then their nature must be very different from that of their species in Siberia."

We had not proceeded much further, however, before I began to mistrust my impressions, and to think by the stillness of the creatures that I seemed to perceive, that they were the work of the chisel, and not formed of flesh and blood. Not displeased, however, with the mistake which I appeared to have made, I was the less ready to be undeceived. At length, when they were too plain to be any longer mistaken for animate beings by any one in his right senses, wherever his thoughts might happen to be wandering, I closed my hands, and, in perfect confidence that I was now fully undeceived, exclaimed, "What an excellent specimen of art is here displayed!—upon my word I took them for real, living seals." At which the proprietor of the gardens, with much *naïvété*, but with how much disappointment I know not, exclaimed: "Gospodin! Gospodin! they were intended for sheep."

This somewhat awkward matter ended by Alcibiades arriving and making some amends for the mischief he had given the occasion for, by informing the liberal

patron of the arts, that in Europe we had few or none of the fat-tailed sheep, such as in effect these works of the chisel were designed to represent.

These were, by no means, all the curiosities in this way that were to be seen in the gardens, but they were the last that I made any such sad mistake about. I took care in future to keep possession of my friend, to whose aid I was much indebted in being able to comprehend what we afterwards examined. There were some lions in stone of the size of life, or somewhat larger. They had, indeed, quite human faces with the Mongolian expression. But as the sculptor had neither been in the countries which the king of the beasts inhabits, nor in those into which he is sometimes led captive, and, therefore, had not had the advantage of study from nature, such a want of exactness in the features of the face and the expression of the countenance might be easily pardoned.

But there were other specimens of the noble art, about which, unaided, I should have been much more embarrassed. These were copies, it is true, of such of nature's works as admit of considerable scope to the imagination of the sculptor, and had they been executed with the greatest truth, might not have been recognised, by even the zoologists of our schools. The learning, however, of Alcibiades enabled me to satisfy my curiosity concerning them. "You will recollect," said my friend, "that Herodotus informs us, that in the far countries in the north lie buried immeasurable treasures, guarded by griffins.* You are now, then, in that very country of which the 'father of history' spoke; and you have seen something of the treasures which the

* The Issedones affirm, that the country beyond them is inhabited by a race of men who have but one eye, and by griffins, who are guardians of the gold.—*Heloe's Berodotus*, Book iv.

world took to be fabulous, until the czars, after destroying the fierce animals that guarded them, opened the ground, and disclosed the precious store of minerals which it contains, and subjected the soil to human labour, and thereby taught the world henceforward to believe nothing to be fable that stimulates enterprise and promises equivalents for labour, and nothing whatever impossible."

What has been before said of the evidences found in Siberia of the existence, in some remote age, of a people occupied both in subterranean labour and in the cultivation of the soil, will be here remembered.

We now took leave of the enterprising millionnaire, and left the gardens—myself, I confess, impressed with the reality of the supposed modern discovery, how few things are impossible, of which these gardens were a fair example.

The next evening that I passed among the hospitable residents at Tomsk, was at the house of General Domitti. The general was a widower, and, therefore, there were no ladies at his *soirées*. The amusements were cards and conversation. Our host introduced me on this occasion to two sojourners for a season in the town, whose acquaintance I had not previously made. One of these was Professor Pschybylsky, the Polish gentleman engaged in geological researches in the country, whose politeness I have already acknowledged in aiding me in furnishing a preceding chapter upon the mines of the Ural Mountains. The other was the Marquis de Traversay, who was occupied with mining speculations. Professor Pschybylsky had been already three summers engaged in exploring the Altai Mountains along the line of division which they form between the Chinese and Russian Empires; and he intended spending two more occupied in the same manner. In

the meantime, he was engaged during the winters, in composing a work, which he intended publishing in French, and which, from the well-known capability of its author, will doubtless make a valuable addition to the scientific libraries of the world. He described the forests throughout the greater part of these mountains, from their western extremity to that portion of them which lies in the longitude of Tomsk, which he had explored, as being extremely fine, abounding in birch, beech, oak, and pine, and the several other firs of the country, and the soil as inconceivably fertile, more especially in the vicinity of Barnaoul. Between that town and the bounds of the empire, he found the country watered by a thousand streams, which are the sources of the three great branches of the Ob, and also of the main stream of the scarcely less mighty Yenessei. No doubt, therefore, when this district becomes peopled in the proportion of which its agricultural resources seem to warrant the expectation, it will form the garden of Siberia.

The marquis held privileges from the government in relation to mineral speculations throughout an unexplored district of the country. He had been three years in Siberia. During the first two of these, although personally engaged in the most arduous researches, he had discovered nothing to warrant the commencement of any establishment; but during the summer just passed, he had been more successful, and had been able to commence his proper operations; and he had brought with him from his newly-opened mine two pouds of gold, as the first fruits of the riches which he was in full expectation of acquiring.

The Marquis de Traversay was of French family, and was one of the existing monuments of the effects of the revolutions to which the distracted country of his fathers

seems to be for ever doomed. He now held the rank of admiral in the Russian navy; and he had seen as much service as his age and the times had admitted. He had commanded a frigate under Codrington at the battle of Navarino; and he spoke of the British admiral in terms of enthusiastic admiration, and said he intended visiting England as soon as it was in his power, on purpose to pay his respects to him. Some conversation passed about the battle, in which the marquis stated, that notwithstanding all that had been said in Europe concerning the immediate cause which had led to it, which he supposed had never been taken any notice of by our admiral, the real cause was the appearance of the Russian colours, which were no sooner seen by the Turks than they opened their fire; and thus the British admiral, merely because he was not disposed to allow himself to be pelted at without pelting in return, made the signal to close, and the battle became general.

The entertainments continued nightly at some one or other of the houses of the leading families of the inhabitants of Tomsk; and I went frequently to those of the general and the three millionnaires already mentioned. But the government house remained still closed, in consequence of the continued indisposition of the governor's lady.

It is not the custom at Tomsk to give any invitations. Those who lead in society have a day in the week fixed, on which their houses are open both for dinner and for the *soirée*, at one or both of which, every one who has once had a general invitation is expected. Music, cards, and conversation, and dancing whenever the younger sort muster sufficiently strong and are so disposed, are the ordinary amusements; and a supper always closes the evening. The expenditure and luxury,

though not on these occasions like that described at the house of Gospodin Astaschaff at the *fête* of his lady are commonly very great. The rye-bread, beef, and cabbage, and *quass*, which are almost the only cheap articles in the way of food in Siberia, are for that very reason banished from the houses of the rich; and their place is supplied by wheaten bread of imported flour, as white as that of Paris or London, and the most delicate dishes of the rarer wild birds of the country preserved, and even meats and vegetables, which come from Europe hermetically sealed, and champagne, and the wines of Bordeaux, Oporto, Xeres, and Madeira. Often, indeed, even upon ordinary occasions, more than a case of sixty bottles of champagne is consumed during the evening, the price of which is twenty rubles assignat the bottle, or about seventeen shillings English.

As I was so frequently at the houses of the three millionnaires in particular, I may perhaps make a few more observations upon their princely establishments, without exceeding the limits that a due regard to propriety in such matters suggests.

Every thing within and without these houses, was upon a parallel scale, from the fitting up of the drawing-rooms with their several articles of luxury imported from St. Petersburg, to that of the kitchen, and even to the stables in which the noble animal so much abused by the peasant and *yemstchik*, has all the comforts that the most favoured of his race enjoy in Western Europe. I entered but one of the kitchens, which was that of Gospodin Philomonoff. Eighty-two servants and dependents were sitting at the table at dinner; and I was told, that sometimes there were about a hundred and twenty in the same house.

The provision made by the three proprietors of these houses for the instruction of their children, was

reeable to the wants arising from the insulated position their town, and commensurate with the arrangements oughout the different departments of their establishents. Gospodin Astaschaff, who had only a son, aintained an accomplished German gentleman in his use as tutor or *governor*, to apply the term equivalent that in use here. Gospodin Philomonoff had daughters nly, for whom he had a governess of the same nation; and ospodin Garrockhoff, who had both sons and daughters, ad a German lady and gentleman as governor and overness. Thus whatever the wants of the present generation, no fear can be entertained, that that which is to succeed will be full of all desirable knowledge, out of which it is to be hoped, will at least arise some reform in the present extravagant manner of living, which cannot be favourable either to the interests or the morals of the Siberians.

I shall here mention an act performed by one of these gentlemen a few days before I arrived, which filled the town with commendations, and subsequently furnished all Siberia, or at least all the parts of the country which it had time to reach, with a subject of conversation during the whole winter. The anecdote is highly illustrative of the Russian disposition generally. It was related to me by a gentleman who witnessed what he recounted; and the truth of what he related, I heard myself afterwards confirmed by the party concerned that was the least likely to exaggerate the circumstance.

There was a small party at the table of Gospodin Astaschaff, when the conversation turned to a discussion upon the inequality of fortunes, and upon the wonderful state of happiness to which riches were supposed to conduct, and the sufferings which attend poverty; and the governor in the family upon this occasion made this remark:—"Wealth," said he, "abstractedly con-

sidered, is a definite term: but as to individual riches they are merely relative. Some are rich with less than the sum that others possess, and think themselves poor. The happiest estate is competence, or wealth proportionate to our accidental position, and resulting from our labour, provided we can frame our minds to contentment, when we ought so to do."

"And what would you yourself consider competence in your own case?" said Gospodin Astaschaff, in reply to this definition of the term.

"Why," replied the governor, "if I had a poud of gold, my contentment would be complete and my happiness would be perfect; for this would supply all the wants I can ever expect to have."

"Since that is all you require," then said Gospodin Astaschaff, "I make you a present of a poud of *gold*."

A few days after this, and while I was in the town, the poud of gold, in coined money, was handed to the governor by the lady of the generous donor. But whether the worthy man who received it, has ever since been contented and perfectly happy I am not able to say.

A few hundred yards from the house of this munificent proprietor of mines, resides a merchant of the old Russia school, engaged in the China trade, and possessing wealth supposed to be nearly equal to that of those who are employing their gold in the manner we have seen, but who lives buried in solitude amongst his dormant treasures, and is seldom seen beyond his threshold, and never in society. Once, however, he was pointed out to me in the street, walking with his eyes fixed on the ground, and dressed in a *schouba* that an artizan would have long before thrown aside.

Which may be the better of the two extremes in which the Russian character here appears, and of which the

travagant expenditure in the houses of the proprietors mines, is the effect of the one, and the avarice of the er that of the other, and which the worst, abactedly considered, may perhaps be doubtful. But, hich is attended with the most happiness, and which roductive of the greatest misery, both with regard to the ossessors of the gold, and in relation to all that come ithin the vortex of its influence, cannot be difficult to etermine.

## CHAP. XXIV.

### TOMSK.

Inhabitants preparing for Winter.—Change of Wheeled Carriages for Sledges.—Ordinary Time of setting in of Winter.—First Winter Promenade.—Fashionable World.—Costumes of different Classes.—Ladies.—Varieties of Sledges.—Sunday and Holiday Promenades.—Most approved Temperature for Promenading.—Care of the Ladies.—Character of the lesser Injuries by the Frost.—*Soirée* at the Government-house.—Amusements.—A Moscow Dandy.—His Travels and Opinions of Paris and London.—His Travels in Siberia.—Reflections of a Genius in Solitude concerning the Existence of Evil.—False Impressions of the Deity.—Relations of this Life to the next.—What a French Sovereign might do.—Apparent Inconsistencies in our Nature.

During the early days of my sojourn at Tomsk, all the inhabitants were busy in making preparations against the common enemy, the cold, and repairing or setting up their winter vehicles. In all the rooms in the houses at this season, are put double windows, and at the entrances from the streets or courts are put a second, and often a third door; and in all, save such substantial brick buildings as those which have been above-mentioned, the crevices throughout the houses are "chinced," or have strips of paper pasted over them; and many other little defensive works are also performed against the wily invader. In the meantime, the wheeled carriages of every denomination are abandoned for the *sani* or sledge, which national vehicle will not escape a particular notice in a future page.

Upon making inquiry, on our arrival at Tomsk, con-

cerning the weather that had been lately experienced in this part of the country, we found that some snow had fallen here about ten days before we arrived, but that it had lain only a short time upon the ground, and that the weather had been since as fine as we found it at the epoch of our arrival. This we heard also, was what was constantly experienced at this season, which agrees with the course of the climate and season in the eastern countries upon the North American continent, where the inhabitants call the short intervening space between the time of the first snow or cold, and the proper setting in of the winter, the "Indian Summer." The thermometer upon the day after our arrival was at two degrees above the zero of Réaumur at eight o'clock in the morning, and at eight degrees, with a cloudless sky and sunshine, at noon.

The first out-of-doors winter display of the people of Tomsk was on the 20th of October. The weather up to this time had been variable since our arrival. Sometimes it had been sufficiently cold to form a hard bottom, upon which the snow, which fell in considerable quantities, seemed set for the winter, when suddenly all again melted away. But the first simultaneous occurrence of bright sun, firm ground, calm, beaten snow, and a Sunday or *fête* day, fell this autumn upon this day, and all the world was abroad. The Tomsk dinner hour is at one o'clock; and before three the principal street exhibited all the parade of fashion, from the gay *sani* of the generals and the millionnaires, splendidly decorated, and drawn by European horses, down to those of the *bourgeoisie*, and the poor *chinovnik*, with a single horse and single occupant besides the *isvoshtchik*, for no one drives himself. Muffled up, beauty and military plumes in sledges of every description and degree of luxury, glided noiselessly along the snowy ways in sufficient numbers to give a stranger

a high impression of the wealth of the town, and a just idea of the manner in which it is employed.

I had set out with the intention of walking, and alone, but was unsuccessful in my attempt; for some one that I had scarcely seen before, picked me up, willing or not, before I had made a dozen steps; and I found myself at once mingled among the gay promenaders of the Siberian town.

The costume of the inhabitants is as various in winter as in summer, and is regulated by the rank, or fortune, or profession of the parties. The military officers never put off their plumed caps; but the civilians wear fur caps of all forms and at all costs. The rest of the dress of all classes that is seen, consists of a simple *schouba* or pelisse, of which the material that it is composed forms the distinction. All who aspire to the first rank must be dressed in sable when walking or driving in fine weather for pleasure, and in bear-skin when it is colder, or when they are travelling. But those whose ambition does not affect this rank, or whose means are more limited, are content to walk, drive, and travel in the colder weather in wolf-skins. The under *chinovnik* dress in black lamb-skins; and they suffer much when they travel, from not being able to obtain better clothing to protect them against the cold. In the meantime, the peasants, whose condition is usually much better, dress ordinarily in deer-skins, which are said to be the warmest of any skins whatsoever. And they certainly are so, in proportion to their weight and the space they occupy, though the fur of the bear and that also of the wolf are without doubt much warmer. The men of the lowest of all classes, the actual criminal exiles, and others who work during the summer in the mines, dress at this season in common sheep-skins.

The winter dress of the Siberians sits picturesquely upon the peasants, who draw their *schoubas* tight round

the waist with a scarf, but not upon men or women of any other class, owing to an absolute decree of fashion, which proscribes the girdle, and is obeyed by all except the peasants, by which the appearance of the dress is spoiled. Indeed, the *schouba* usually worn by all classes above the peasants, in walking, is made as ugly as can be imagined, by being put on with the sleeves, which it never wants, left dangling at the sides.

The peasant women wear precisely the same dress as the men, when abroad, save that a hood of the girdled *schouba* covers the head, instead of a fur cap.

The *schouba* of the ladies is a true cloak, in which, however, they very rarely walk. If a morning visit is to be made merely across the street, the *sani* conveys them. And when their acquaintance with those they visit is not familiar, or when the rank or fortune is disproportionate, the formalities and etiquette are as rigorous as at St. Petersburg or Moscow. The head-dress of the ladies without doors is the same as in the larger towns in Russia. The bonnet that is worn in summer is merely lined with fur for the winter.

The variety in the construction of the *sani* upon the gay occasion of which we are speaking, was such as to attract, in an especial manner, the attention of the stranger, who might have travelled upon snow in other countries. The form of the Siberian pleasure *sani*, is on several accounts inferior to that most approved of in Canada; but the *sani* used in travelling, as we shall have a better occasion to see, is much superior to the Canadian *cariole* or *slay*. The great length between the fore and hind wheels in the Siberian travelling carriage of summer has been noticed, and, true to the Russian character, the taste runs into the other extreme in the construction of the winter pleasure vehicles, at least. The *polozia*, or runners as they are called by the Canadians, which in the *sani* supply the place of the

wheels in a summer carriage, are too short, which causes them to sink the deeper into the snow when it is not hard. They rise also in front too abruptly, by reason of which they find the more resistance from every obstruction they meet. The vehicle is usually handsomely painted, and sometimes lined with fur, and otherwise comfortably accommodated. The wealthier of the ladies have close *sani* that resemble our close cabriolets, as far as the body of the vehicle is concerned.

Every Sunday or *fête* day after the winter has fairly commenced, unless the cold be excessive, the same display is to be seen. When the temperature, however, reaches to a degree that is dangerous to beauty, which is not wholly wanting in the fair sex of Tomsk, and when the cold is not yet so great as to confine the more adventurous of the ladies, it is necessary that the most prominent of the features of the face should be covered; for frost is as often a treacherous as an open enemy, and the hardiest might chance, upon the morning after an afternoon's drive, to rise minus a feature very essential to the beauty of the human countenance. Thus the thermometer, which hangs outside a window of almost every house, is usually consulted before the horses are ordered out; and if it indicate ten or more degrees of frost, the nose, at least, and often the mouth of the delicate promenaders, to assure their safety, must be concealed. My good friend who bore the name of the gay Athenian, and who was a bachelor, and a great admirer of beauty, informed me, that he always looked at his thermometer before he went out on these special occasions, that he might be at least prepared for disappointment; but that, nevertheless, even sometimes, when the mercury indicated a degree or two more than that which he called the ugly point, on account of its being that at which the muffling up of noses was recommended to the ladies, some of the

unger sort did not seem to perceive it. I found it cessary, however, on one of the occasions, when we ere together, to caution him against being the possible cause of any such relaxation of common prudence mong his country-women, some of whom I am sure we et unmuffled, with the thermometer at fifteen degrees f frost, lest upon some morning after the drive of the revious day, any one might be found wanting the eature that was supposed to be most susceptible of old. It is proper to say, however, that upon all occasions a scalded or burnt face, as the effect of the frost, on account of its resemblance to that of fire, is appropriately called, is more common than any more serious accident. The ears indeed are always the most susceptible part of the body, and the cheek is frequently scalded before the nose.

It was not before several weeks after my arrival at Tomsk, that the governor's lady was sufficiently recovered from her indisposition to admit evening company. When it was known, however, that the Government-house was again thrown open, the first Sunday evening was very welcome to the good people of Tomsk, who assembled, as well to offer their congratulations upon the recovery of the lady, as for the ordinary enjoyments of the *soirée*.

Upon my making my appearance, I was introduced by the governor to his lady, who was seated in the middle room of three, including that of reception during the proper business hours of the day, and surrounded by parties offering their congratulations on her recovery; and I had the gratification of meeting in our hostess a lady of that degree of refinement to which station serves to give expression, but which it cannot improve.

After the luxury displayed in some of the houses I had previously visited, I was not able here to avoid regarding what otherwise would not have attracted my

attention. The rooms displayed good taste in the choice of decorations the most suitable to the position of the family and to the character of the country, and were at least equal in neatness and elegance to those of the houses among ourselves, which are arranged by our ladies, and accommodated to moderate fortunes. The Government-house, in fact, was a pattern which it were well for the morals and progress of the country, were it imitated by all the leading families and all the wealthy proprietors of mines throughout Siberia.

The amusements of the evening were similar to those at the other houses, which have been already mentioned, with the addition of chess, which I had not seen played before, but have reason to remember, from having had the confidence to sit down to a game with the governor, without knowing, until it was too late, that I was opposed to a mathematician of celebrity.

But there was a novelty, however, of another kind, which excited considerable curiosity among all the guests, in the form of a Moscow dandy, who had lately arrived. The good folks of Tomsk, although they may sometimes see the military uniform paraded with pride, and although they are ceremonious enough in their social intercourse, have not in the very richest circles, any among them who have contracted one atom of the attributes of the exquisite of the European towns. To those among them who had not travelled, or had been some time stationary, the sight of a fashionable man was quite a show. The object of our admiration was a young man of fine person, and a relative of the governor's family. When I first perceived him, he was occupying a whole divan, not from any desire to do so, but owing, as it plainly appeared, to a kind of terror, not easily defined, on the part of the rest of the guests, at approaching too near to so grand a personage; for the proof of his sociable disposition lay purring in his lap in the form of a large

Chinese fox-tailed, and baboon-faced cat, which he had just purchased for a hundred rubles, for the purpose of taking to Moscow, and which he stroked ever and anon very gently, without caring about dirtying his white kid gloves. I found, moreover, upon being introduced to the gentleman, as often turns out upon such occasions, that the properties of the dandy, which though they sat upon him very naturally, were only the external suit of manners and dress in which the real man was clothed; and which, at the age of ambition, when we court any thing that may distinguish us from the crowd of common men, do no more than indicate that lack of opportunity of engaging in the pursuit of something more worthy of distinctions has driven us to the tailor and the *modiste* to make us remarkable and admired.

The gentleman was a traveller. He had been at London and at Paris; and of these two capitals, like most of the continentals, he preferred Paris. When asked by a native of Tomsk, which was the superior of these wonderful capitals of the two rival kingdoms, as the Russians are wont to call England and France, his answer was I thought judicious and just. "They cannot," he said, "be put in comparison, for there is no similitude between them." Yet he thought London the most original town to be seen in Europe, and he much admired the cleanliness of its inhabitants generally. The taverns, which is the word the Russians generally use in speaking of what we now usually call hotels, he found very expensive and very gloomy; for, like most foreigners who sojourn in England, and are not acquainted with our language, of which he knew nothing, he was condemned to live in the very worst houses that could be chosen to give a just impression of the country and the people; and thus he went away, like many others, dissatisfied, and, probably, about as wise as he came. He gave us some account of his

journey from Moscow to Tomsk. He complained very much of his sufferings, owing to the quantity of furs in which he had been compelled to lie helplessly wrapped, and the difficulty of breathing through the mass of ice which continually collected about the aperture left for respiration around the mouth. He declared, moreover, that he would not go another step towards the east, for the wealth of all the mines in the department; and, indeed, he very soon after this departed, to retrace his steps, and return to his home in the ancient capital of Russia.

I cannot close this account of the inhabitants of this Siberian town, without one further little revelation concerning the life and opinions of the most singular of its inhabitants.

Very often during the tedious winter evenings at Tomsk, a party of boon companions would meet at the common apartment at Albinos' dwelling; and, sometimes they engaged in telling tales of the chase and of their adventures among the barbarous tribes inhabiting the wide wastes of the country, when they were in search of the gold deposits, and sometimes in playing cards; and among them occasionally appeared my good friend Alcibiades. Sometimes also, on these occasions I joined this party of Siberian rovers and others; and I may say, that when they were in a merry mood, never any where else have I seen men moved to mirth and laughter in an equal degree to that which my friend would move the whole company assembled. The discourse, however, and its effects, were lost to myself, on account of my want of acquaintance with the tongue through which the gibes, jests, flashes of wit, and other motives to merriment, met the ear. Sometimes, however, in my own apartment, when there were but few persons present, and when the discourse was of a different kind, and carried on in a tongue with which I was familiar, the

opinions which my friend expressed upon various subjects which it embraced, greatly interested me, as the result of the reflections of a cultivated mind amidst the desert, undisturbed by the turmoils which distract our thoughts amidst the quick succession of events and the scenes that are continually before our eyes in the populous countries of Europe. I shall however mention only one or two of such of his opinions as may best serve to show the course of thought natural to men left to contemplate almost alone amidst the solitudes of nature, in a land at once devoid of beauty of scenery, and of the works of art such as genius has brought forth in other countries, and in which every one may find perpetual subjects for admiration, for study, and for reflection.

The opinions that our alternately gay and grave philosopher expressed, which most attracted my attention by their seeming originality, were concerning the improvement of the social state generally among mankind, and concerning that great stumbling block to moral philosophers, the existence of evil, and, upon the relation of what passed in this life to that which we trust we shall enjoy hereafter.

Upon the first mentioned of these subjects, that of our social condition, he was of opinion that the imperfections in our institutions were in a great measure owing to the image which even good men, as a means of restraining vice, continually seek to impress, upon the minds of the multitude, concerning the Creator, upon whom, whether taught or untaught, all feel they depend and alone worship. He thought that by so frequently showing the Deity in his anger, and which was always in a picture so much clearer and more definite in allusion to the next state, than that in which his beneficence was made to appear, the spirits of men were depressed, their hearts hardened, and their disposition subjected to ill-temper

and moroseness, from which proceeded half those vices and errors among us, which no regulation of our social institutions could cure. Whereas he thought, that if the instructors of the multitude in all lands, under every system, would show that the true motives to a good life should be gratitude and not terror, and if they would dwell more upon the rewards of virtue, and upon the delight attending a good conscience, that all men in every condition of society would not only be better, but also more easily governed, and that all their institutions would proportionally improve.

On the other subjects, the existence of evil and our condition in a future world, he thought that a reasonable consideration concerning the connection of our occupations here, and those for which we were designed, at once explained the difficulty which so much embarrassed many reflecting men, and afforded the most definite and cheering prospect concerning the future. He was of opinion, that the occupations in which we should be engaged hereafter, would be such as required that we should, through one source or other, become impressed by experience, in a more or less lively manner, with the nature of evil, and its effects upon the constitution, character, and conduct of all sentient beings. But as to what those occupations would be, his opinions were, that science and the arts, as the only employments in which we engage here, that are not frivolous or degrading, and without enduring results, afforded us the best indication. These he believed to be the elements which we were permitted to become acquainted with, of the grand employments in which we should be hereafter engaged.

He made some observations at different times, upon the effects of Churches or communities upon the true spirit of Christianity, which he thought would increase, as the Churches of the several countries became distinct

from those of other countries under different forms of government. To the French he said he chiefly looked for the next great move in this particular. He was an admirer of that people, whom he thought the most ingenious and chivalrous in Europe; and he believed, that had Louis Philippe, who then reigned in France, kept up the same good intelligence with his clergy that was maintained by Napoleon, he might have imitated Peter the Great, and have freed the Church of France from its degrading dependence upon a foreign priesthood: and this example, he believed, on account of the influence of France in Europe, would have been followed by other nations, to the infinite benefit of the whole Christian family.

On one occasion, Alcibiades made several observations upon the difficulty he found in reconciling the apparent inconsistencies in our nature, but more especially in regard to the disproportion which there seemed to be between our physical and our intellectual attributes. "And I do not know," said he, "any example that we could take, that would more clearly illustrate this, than that afforded by your great natural philosopher, who discovered and explained many laws of the material universe, in which we do not perceive the imperfections that appear to belong to things more immediately around us. Let us then," he continued, "visit the philosopher in his study and his domicile. He is alive again, and seated in his observatory amidst the instruments of his power. He bids us look upon the sky, spangled with its myriads of circulating globes. He reveals to us all their movements and their relations to, and dependence upon, one another. What a compass of thought possesses us! 'What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In apprehension how like a God!' We go home impressed with the wonder, and exulting in the attributes of the

human soul. We are filled with hope. Our hearts are open, and gratitude and contentment wholly possess us. Our spirit seems released from the base earth, to which it has been chained till now. We are prepared to take our flight beyond the mean things of this world, to inhabit the land where we are appointed to rest for ever.

"But the next day we again visit the philosopher. It is the hour at which men are wont to take food to maintain their strength. The companions of Newton are assembled. Upon the table lie many pieces of our slain fellow-creatures of the irrational tribes. One of the guests is eating of the flesh of one animal, and another of another. What a piece of work, indeed, is man! How like is his nature to that of the fiercest beasts of the field! How humiliating the thought! Newton—the greatest of living men—is eating a pig!"

## CHAP. XXV.

### TOMSK.

Public and Private Baths.—Character.—Influence on the System. — Compared with the Turkish Bath. — Their general Use.—Appearances of the Bath-house.—Bathers.—Strange Ideas of Delicacy.— Temperature.—Description of the Process.—The Peasants' Method.

I SHALL in this chapter, give an account of a visit which I made to one of those houses of real luxury here to all classes that frequent them, and which, indeed, are to be found in every town save the very meanest, throughout Russia and Siberia, containing the public vapour baths.

Every body knows something of the baths of Turkey and other Eastern countries. The Russian bath is only a modification of that of the Turks, and was doubtless introduced by the Tatars, when their power was predominant and their customs prevailed in the fairer parts of the country. The effects of this bath are, a thorough cleansing of the whole material man, both externally and internally, by means of a copious infusion of pure vapour, and the discharge of the impure fluids of the body by means of profuse perspiration. The vapour is, in effect, made to penetrate the entire frame, from every portion of which it expels every unclean particle or latent humour, in whatsoever form it may be found, whether deposited by the grossness or the too great quantity of our viands or beverage, or resulting from obstructed perspiration or indolence. The sick man, where there is no organic disease, is by this bath

often made whole; and the sound man, overwrought with toil, is newly invigorated by its resistless influence. In the meantime, its effects upon the mind are scarcely less remarkable. It overpowers the spirits with intoxicating sensations, which, as they pass away, are found to have produced nearly the same effect that change of air and scene, and sometimes good news, produce upon the mind that has become weary with the same constant pursuit, or the same scene too long before the eyes, and is sickening without knowing why.

The purely Turkish bath is, when well applied, undoubtedly productive also, of all these effects; but the advantage of the Russian is, that we obtain equal or superior results, without any of the disagreeable pressings and pinchings that the Turks and Arabs administer while we are in the act of bathing.

It is no wonder, then, that this bath is considered by the Russians, as among the greatest luxuries they can enjoy; while it is happily not beyond the reach of the poorest of the people, since a few copeks is sufficient to obtain all its advantages.

Upon a bright moonlight night, on my first occasion of bathing, a friend drove me in his *sani* to the bath-house. The house itself, appeared a curious object to us, as we approached it. The roof was covered with sheets of ice, and enormous icicles were hanging from the projections at the bottom of the roof on every side, almost to the ground, and a vapour was oozing from all parts of the building, and rising, and condensing, and falling in fine snow. The whole seen indeed by the moonlight, presented the appearance of such a dwelling as the imagination bestows upon the gay immortals in Eastern tales, and which is well becoming the true restorer of exhausted bodily and mental vigour.

We had chosen Saturday evening, as that upon which the baths are more frequented, in order the better to

see their true character, and the manner of making use of them. Upon entering the general waiting-room, we found ourselves in an apartment, lighted only by a small lamp, which was dimly seen through a cloud of hot vapour that filled the whole space.

The bathing-rooms in all the public baths were, until very lately, common to both sexes; but by an order from the government, the sexes are now separated, and each has one large room apart. But this very commendable attempt to introduce a degree of delicacy unknown before, has not quite established the principle. In the general apartment into which we first entered, many of both sexes were waiting to enter two crowded bath-rooms; and the scene already presented sufficient proof that the letter of the order alone was yet complied with, or perhaps understood. About a dozen of the coarser sex were seen, dimly however through a dense mist, some passing to and fro, and others sitting upon benches by the walls, all quite in the independent state of nature, and, about as many of the fair sex in a condition almost equally independent, yet not ashamed, or apparently in the least degree conscious of any indelicacy whatsoever. We were, however, in an atmosphere in which clothes were scarcely supportable, and which made us soon put off the greater part of our own.

Habit reconciles us to almost every thing. Indeed, there was so much bustle and appearance of business in procuring tickets for admission into the bathing-rooms, from an attendant who stood within a counter, upon which a small lamp was burning, and with the entrances and exits of bathers and attendants, that the scene was more calculated to remind us of cases and positions in which we are sometimes placed by necessity, where the mind is too much occupied, perhaps by some work of charity, to leave room for niceness in its perceptions,

rather than presented the character which description is apt to impress.

After having cast off almost all our remaining clothes, which was absolutely necessary before we proceeded further in our investigations, both on account of the state of the atmosphere, and the dashing of water in all directions within the baths which we were about to enter, we were led by an attendant into an apartment full of bathers, where we found ourselves in an atmosphere at a temperature between forty and forty-five degrees of Réaumur, as the usual heat, and in the midst of figures still dimly seen through the mist, which was here doubly more dense than that in the outer chamber, and in such a scene of confusion, that it was not until we had nearly reached the termination of the long room, crowded with bathers on both sides, that we were aware of what now appeared -- that we were breaking the letter as well as the spirit of the new law, and parading about among the daughters instead of the sons of the land. Upon this discovery, however, we made our retreat.

We took after this, a little more minute survey of the apartments that it was lawful for us to enter. But instead of attempting any further description of the scene within the common bathing-rooms, I shall state more exactly the manner in which the private bath which I took was administered; and when it is remembered that the same process is in action upon sixty or seventy bathers at the same time in the public bath, the scene there will be easily conceived.

We had not to leave the public bath-house to find private baths, there being several passing good within it; and we each now chose his own room, and entered, accompanied by an attendant, which is indispensable. In that which I chose, I found an anteroom used for the purpose of undressing. Here I observed the thermo-

meter was at thirty-eight degrees of heat. But upon opening the door, and entering the proper bathing-room, where the temperature was at forty-seven degrees, I found the heat almost insupportable. At the moment of meeting this atmosphere, the respiration became sufficiently difficult to be slightly painful. But this effect of the sudden change passed away as the perspiration increased; and I afterwards felt no inconvenience when the heat was augmented to fifty degrees.

Upon one side of the room, two large wash-tubs were standing beneath two enormous metal cocks; and, upon the other, there was a stove fixed in the wall. The process commences by the bather placing himself standing in a shallow tub, which is filled by the attendant with water mixed to an agreeable temperature. The attendant then proceeds to pour quantities of water over the head of the bather, and next to rub his body with dried grass. After this has been a little while persevered in, the bather is placed, sitting, upon a bench; and the perspiration now runs down the body in streams. But the rubbing is still persevered in for about ten minutes longer. The next step is an exposure to the contrary extreme, which is not the most agreeable part of the process. It is now necessary for the bather to mount to a bench about four feet high; and while he is seated here, a bucket of icy cold water drawn from the second cock is dashed against his back. The effect of this is to start the whole vital frame, as if the electric spark had passed through the body, from which now proceed fresh floods of perspiration more profuse than ever.

The next step is scarcely less severe, and again in the opposite extreme. Water is now thrown into the metal stove, from which you are not far distant, and from which instantly rushes out a hot vapour with such force, that it is especially necessary to have the back turned to

receive it, and at the same time to shut the eyes. Lastly, the bather mounts to a bench considerably higher than that upon which he has hitherto been sitting, in search of still greater heat; and the attendant, now armed with a birch bough, on which the dried leaves are preserved for the purpose, proceeds to a thorough sweeping or brushing of the bather, rather than rubbing, which appears to apply friction enough to restore the circulation, which by this time has become languid, upon the outer parts of the body.

The bath being thus completed, the bather returns to the outer room of the two which he occupies, where, while he dresses himself, the attendant gradually lets in a little air, in order to lower the temperature sufficiently to prepare him to encounter the external atmosphere.

I shall mention here a common practice with the peasants at the baths, which, although we did not witness it upon this occasion, I frequently saw performed afterwards. It consists in substituting another means of producing the same effects as the dashing of the cold water above mentioned. The bather, incredible as it may appear, at the particular moment that the cold is required, rushes out of the bath and of the house, and plunges into the snow, and rolls about for a minute or two, and then suddenly re-enters the bath. This is even done when the cold is at the greatest which is experienced in the country; and it is esteemed by the peasants as the best and even the most agreeable way of passing through the cold water stage of the process.

These public baths are for the most part frequented by the peasants and inferior classes generally, as almost every good house is furnished with a private bath, nothing differing in principle from that above described.

## CHAP. XXVI.

### TOMSK.

Second Class of the People.—Artisans.—Demoralisation.—Causes.—Tatars excepted.—Criminal and Political Exiles.—Their Condition.—Employments of the Population.—Moral Consequences of the Gold Mines.—Effects in the Town.—Police.—Humiliating Scenes at the Prison.—Forgers discovered.—Domestic Servants.—Prejudice against new Faces sometimes pardonable.—Coolness of Murderers.—Battle between Russian Serfs and Siberians.—Scenes at the Council Chamber.—Enlightened President.—Religious Tolerance and Intolerance.—Murderer in the second Class of the People.—Thief elected to the Council Chamber.—Punishment of a Murderer.—Good Effects of Branding.

We have passed from house to house among the inhabitants of Tomsk of the superior class, and have seen such traits of manners and character as present themselves to the stranger both within and without their dwellings. We have now to regard the other classes of the population, in the light in which we shall have the opportunity of seeing them.

The second class of the inhabitants of Tomsk, according to our arbitrary division of the population in a previous chapter, is composed of the merchants of the second guild, the inferior officials of the mining companies, and a portion of the *chinovnik*. Little presents itself for remark concerning this class, that is not applicable to the same order among the Russians every where, and has not been, more especially in respect to the trading portion, sufficiently dwelt upon in the chapters upon Nijhni Novgorod. The merchants of the

second guild, it may nevertheless be repeated, are, I persuaded, with exceptions (which are, indeed, genera found among the inhabitants of foreign origin), the le endowed with good consciences, of any of their cl among any people of whom I have any knowledg The agents of the companies, who do not belong to t first grade, and the *chinovnik*, who stand in the sa relation to the higher classes of their order, are n torious alike for the irregularity of their lives, an generally, indeed, without those forcible reasons whic spring from want of education, to excuse the errors fo which society must hold them responsible, and which might be pleaded for the deficiencies of their trading fellow-citizens.

The *chinovnik* of this class proceed generally from the humbler classes of the people; but they have been provided by the government with sufficient education to enable them to make themselves respected. It is common to excuse them, at least for the venality for which they are remarkable, by the plea of their insufficient salaries; but their pay has been augmented during the present reign, for the purpose of removing this convenient pretext, without having produced any reform; and this, indeed, is but one of a number of faults which make up their character. The parental and filial ties are weak among them; and as to the conjugal, they too frequently exist only in law and in name. This class of men, indeed, live without having subjected one passion of our nature to that control over its tendency to excess, which is the distinguishing feature in the character of civilised man. So great a degeneracy of manners must be attributed to some more definite and less easily vanquished evil than poverty. Be the causes, however, what they may, a reform in the lives of so numerous a class in the service of the government would have great influence upon

ose classes of the Russian people which appear to hit but the great redeemer Time, whose steps we do ot always find tardy, to reclaim and refine them.

Many artisans and tradesmen who should properly elong to this class, being less under restraint than the ependents, whether upon the government or upon the roprietors of the mines, and having more means at heir disposal, riot in all the excesses, and are addicted o all the vices, that belong to the most degraded state of society that can be imagined. It is even said among the Russians of the better classes, in other parts of the empire as well as in Siberia — and with truth I am persuaded — that just in proportion to the knowledge attained by this class of their fellow-subjects, is the amount of the corruption of manners and general demoralisation which their lives exhibit. Some of those in Siberia, are the descendants of the exiled refuse of Russia, and others are adventurers, who have often probably sought refuge from the scorn of their ultramontane brethren.

Where a state of society has not been attained, when the more intellectual entertainments of our European towns, such as the drama and lectures upon the different branches of knowledge, which by occasionally bringing the people of all classes under the same roof, tend to inspire them with a common respect for one another, the distance between the different classes must ever remain so great that the force of example, whenever it is found among the better orders, is wholly lost upon the inferior. Thus in Siberia, where the order next in consideration to the first, in our classification of the people, scarcely affords any examples worthy of imitation, it is not surprising that the demoralisation existing among the class with whom the worst criminals are associated, should be complete. The depravity, indeed, generally prevailing among this, the third and lowest

class of the inhabitants, is worse than is usually found among men living wholly without the advantages of civilised government.

But it is especially incumbent here to mention, that from all that has been said of the manners and morals of the different classes of the inhabitants of Tomsk, it must be understood, that the Tatar portion of the population is excepted. They cannot be put in any way in comparison with the Russo-Siberians. What has been said of the Tatars of Kazan, will in general be found equally applicable to those of Tomsk, and, indeed, to those in all other parts of the empire.

It will be as well, before dismissing the subject, to make a few remarks upon some local and more apparent causes than those above named, which have contributed to produce this widely-diffused demoralisation, and upon some of its immediate effects, with the inconveniences of which they are productive to the better classes of the population.

It is but a few years since the towns of Siberia and the villages in their vicinity afforded a tranquil resting-place for the exiles of every denomination. The political exiles, transferred from the populous towns of the empire, reposed here beyond the bounds of possible excitement, occupied, for the most part, in cultivating the land, and, if subdued in spirit by solitude and the monotony of their lives, still cherishing the hope of some day repassing the mountains. As to the criminal exiles, though their case was different as far as regarded their hopes of return, yet when they were once settled after the manner we have above seen, they may be said to have commenced a new existence, and to have entered upon a course of life that was capable of amelioration. If no hope, indeed, remained to them, of ever recrossing the mountains, they sat themselves down with minds at ease, and forgetting their former occupations, friends,

relations, and every thing that was connected with their lost homes, they engaged in such branches of agriculture as the climate admitted, and as were best adapted to supply their spare wants. They might have been transferred to another planet, and not have experienced a more thorough change in their lives than they now underwent. Even their offences were forgotten or forgiven. And as long as this state of things endured, and they were occupied with tilling the land, they were only distinguished from the rest of the inhabitants, composed of the descendants of exiles, *chinovnik*, and merchants, as well as in the official documents that concerned them, by the appellation of *Schastni Ludi*, the Unfortunates. Since the discovery, however, of many new mines, and the augmented amount of labour engaged in working them, this state of things is wholly changed. In the towns and villages upon the high roads, and every where near the vicinity of any of the mines, notwithstanding the commendable arrangements of the government respecting the working of them, a large proportion of the population is wholly maintained by the various employments incident to the extraction and transport of the precious metals; and the full effects of this change in their pursuits will be presently seen.

In the summer time, Tomsk is deserted by its able-bodied men, who seek occupation, chiefly at the mines upon the Yenessei. The labour at the mines generally, begins sooner or later in June, according to the season, and lasts until September; before the close of which month the proprietors are obliged by law to discharge all workmen and labourers whatsoever. The remuneration that the miners of every class receive for their labour during this short period, if they choose to save all they earn, is usually enough to maintain them with little or no labour during the rest of the year; and thus the town is filled during the winter with idlers that

become practised in every sort of vice. The strong arm indeed of the law, is not able to keep them from worse excesses than disgrace humanity among mere savages.

At the time of the breaking up of the summer labour, the roads for a season are infested with these rascals, many of whom riot at the villages on the road until they have spent and gambled away all they had earned during the entire summer. This of course leads to crime upon crime, and to murders especially. Upon the best information I could obtain, no less than forty bodies of these men murdered by some of the same gang to which they belonged, are picked up by the police upon the roads in the average of years, at this season, between the above-mentioned mines and Tomsk.

This will serve to give some idea of the state of the town during the winter. The police, however, is highly efficient, and this remark will apply to all the settlements throughout Siberia. As a proof of this, it may be mentioned, that at this time there were about 600 prisoners in the gaol at Tomsk for all sorts of crimes of which the law takes cognizance. Some of these were murderers, who had undergone their floggings, and now awaited transportation to the silver mines of Nertchinsk, the last punishment which the law can inflict. Three or four in the prison at this time, were such desperadoes, that they could not be trusted loose, even among their accomplices in crime, and were kept chained to the wall. Such a "taming *scene* to human pride," as this prison affords, all monarchs and all statesmen ought once to behold. The contemplation of our species in their state of nature, or under the worst of governments, affords no such useful lesson. It is amidst exhibitions such as this, that we are taught most forcibly the importance of education, and impressed most strongly with a sense of our duty towards those

who, with few motives to virtue, walk amidst the temptations to evil, which every degree even of civilised life affords.

I shall mention here an instance of the detection of offenders against the law, which took place while I was at Tomsk, in proof of the efficiency of the police in Siberia.

The genius for imitation, observed so strongly among the inferior classes of the Russians, has been before noticed; and we cannot be surprised to find instances of its perversion in Siberia. The chief of the police of Tomsk, had been some time in possession of several forged notes, and having cause to suspect the quarter whence they proceeded, he concealed himself in an apartment in the suspected house, and at night, crept out from under the table upon which the delinquents were engaged in forging new notes. The rogues, who were two exiles, were actually making the notes without the aid of any sort of machinery whatever, but with the mere use of an ordinary quill pen. I afterwards saw some that they had completed, which were each of the value of a silver ruble; and when they were side by side with the genuine notes of the government, not one among several persons present, could distinguish the difference between the true and the counterfeit. It may be mentioned here, as rather an uncommon circumstance in the monetary affairs of states or provinces, that paper is in this country so generally preferred to silver or gold, that it is not without difficulty that the authorities are able to get the coin that is sent from Russia put into circulation.

Great inconvenience, it is easy to perceive, must be suffered by the honest people of every class at Tomsk in all the relations they are compelled to have with their townsmen of the classes which perform for them any domestic or other services. I shall mention one or two

instances which came directly within my own observation, from which a fair idea may be gathered of what is experienced by those longer exposed to these inconveniences.

"Albinos," the quondam Englishman with whom I resided, and for whose name at Tomsk, it is believed, sufficient authority has been given to sanction its continued use, made frequent changes in his household; and I was never sorry when these took place, from a conviction that those who came could not be worse, and might be better, than those who went away. Some people have an objection to seeing new faces about them, and are ready to suffer great inconvenience to avoid this. No doubt every feeling that tends to dispose us to attach ourselves to our fellow-men, and more especially to those who serve us, is worthy of praise. But the ear does not so easily accustom itself to the voice, nor the eye to the features, of condemned felons, as to contemplate them patiently at all hours, even though the laws of society have been satisfied, and the church has absolved them; and no such objections to change of faces can obtain where the men who present themselves hourly to our eyes are necessarily such as these. Sometimes, indeed, when there is nothing positively revolting in the cast of a man's features who is constantly before us, we are apt, even towards the greatest criminal, to entertain the tender feelings of pity; and from this it is not impossible that even good-will and attachment may proceed; but more especially if we are able to entertain hopes of the man being reformed. But when men attend upon us whose entrances and exits must be watched, and when we know that we cannot turn our back upon the servant that brings in our *samovar* without the danger of losing something, we can no longer restrain our contempt for men without the attributes of humanity which are pos-

sessed by the savage unacquainted with the blessings of civilised government and established laws; and we are compelled to place our fellow-men in our estimation beneath the quadruped that faithfully serves us to the utmost of his limited capacity: and this is the character of all those who serve at Tomsk, if we except some who are employed by the high officials, and the richer and more influential of the inhabitants.

Upon one occasion, after a change, just as our hopes were set upon two better-looking faces of a man and his wife than we had seen for some time, and while we were at dinner, an officer of the police arrived to carry them both off under the accusation of robbing their last employer. Nevertheless, such was the difficulty of getting any servants that promised any thing better, that after waiting upon ourselves for several days, both mine host and myself were reduced to the necessity of petitioning the authorities to let us have our thieves again, pending the trial. The answer to our demand was, that in consequence of the want of proof of the robbery of which they were accused they must be detained until the daily floggings which they received induced them to confess. After a day or two more, however, when the floggings brought but a firmer and firmer denial of the guilt of which they were accused, the authorities whom we had addressed, gave them leave to return to us to remain until sufficient proof of the robbery might be discovered.

But these were not the worst faces we had to look upon. I dare say there are few among those who have travelled much, who have not at some time or other been waited upon by thieves; and many have doubtless even "sat at good men's feasts" with worse than such petty rogues as would empty our pockets of the "trash that has been slave to thousands." But it was here my fortune, for the first time as I am bound to believe,

to be attended upon by murderers. No less than two such men were in our house, and served us at the same time; and so necessary were their services, and so common the circumstance in the good town of Tomsk, that we should have been sorry to have lost them on account of any too nice scruples about the matter. My worthy host, indeed, did not know when he engaged them, to which class of the "unfortunates" they belonged. They had suffered their scourging, branding, and transportation, and by the law and customs of society, they were now regarded as other ordinary rogues, and, like the rest, were freer than they were in Russia before their conviction. They might, indeed, have passed for mere whipped thieves, were it not that their shame was perpetuated, like that of the first murderer, by a mark that the Russian law sets upon the foreheads of these criminals. They had been engaged with their caps over their brows and over their temples, which were both marked, and mine host's eyes were not of the best. When the circumstance, however, of our having two actual murderers in the house became known, "Albinos" called them into our common apartment, and questioned them concerning the particulars of the sad events which the marks upon their foreheads and temples disclosed, hoping to hear some extenuating explanation. Their answers, however, were the reverse of this. One of them, in reply, said quite jocosely, that he was sent into Siberia for stealing a man's cap, which was of velvet and very tempting, without taking it off his head. He seemed, indeed, to be well satisfied with the notoriety he enjoyed. The other said very coolly, that he was one of several sent into exile for showing an old lady, who was their mistress, the shortest way to heaven, by strangling her while she was sleeping, upon a journey on which they were conducting her. They were her serfs, he also said, and they murdered her on account of

he severity with which she had treated them; but if they had been free, he added, they would not have done it. Yet it could not, he said, matter greatly; for she was old, and would not have lived much longer.

I wished to know how many such men there were in the town at the time; but I could obtain no certain information. It was supposed, however, that there were several hundred, all from Russia, the higher crimes of every sort committed here being punished by removal to the mines of Nertchinsk.

Though my worthy landlord thought little of being waited upon by such criminals, his feelings, as he informed me, had been more than once greatly outraged during a journey, upon finding he had been sitting at table in company with men stamped for their crimes, but whose foreheads had been covered by their caps when they sat down. He had, however, latterly, he said, made it a rule not to sit down in any house when travelling, until every one in the room had unbonneted.

While speaking of domestic matters at Tomsk, I must mention a little occurrence that took place at the time I was here, which will serve to show that even in the very best houses, into which the criminal exiles do not enter, the good inhabitants are not quite happy in this particular.

The marquis before mentioned, brought a troop of servants with him from Russia. They were his serfs; and he was considered to be the most fortunate in possessing them, of any one in the town. He was, however, living in the same house with the general, whose servants were chiefly proper colonists, the immediate descendants of exiles; and the two parties could not agree. The serfs thought themselves degraded in living in company with the descendants of exiles; and the colonists, who were of course free men, looked with contempt upon the serfs, on account of their state of

bondage. Thus both masters were occasionally troubled with the squabbles which arose out of this mutual contempt of their servants for each other. But upon a certain day, when both the general and the marquis were absent, the hostile parties came to a pitched battle; and the Russian serfs, being victors, drove the Siberians, after well thrashing them, into the streets. After this the masters were obliged to divide their domestic establishments, in order to separate their belligerent dependents.

But in order to show that even the highest crimes against society are not confined to the humbler grades of life in Siberia, and to give some idea of their proportion among the other classes, and of the degrees of indifference with which habit has brought them to be regarded here, two particular instances among many with which the traveller became acquainted, will be selected for notice, merely on account of the circumstances, independent of the crimes themselves, that at this moment gave them more than ordinary notoriety. But as the Anglo-Siberian with whom I resided will be mentioned in connection, not with the crimes, but with the circumstances which show the light in which they were regarded, and which gave them their present notoriety, it may be as well, first to report a short anecdote that was current here at this time concerning our quondam countryman's entrance into the council of Tomsk, and of which he had been some years a member when I was in Siberia.

The new Russian subject, having been elected a member of this body, upon the earliest occasion made his appearance to be sworn, in order to take his seat. This assembly is presided over in Siberia by an officer called *Goorurski Pravlayniz*, who performs also the duties of the military governor of the department during that officer's absence. The office was at present

filled by Alexander Nenagratski, whose name I feel pleasure in recording, on account of the transaction with which it is connected. The question, which is usual, was put before administering the oath, concerning the religion professed by the member elect, to which the new councillor replied: that he was of the English Church. Upon this, there was a general, and as this fact could not have been unknown to any one, probably a concerted, protest of disapprobation among the members of the Russian Church, whose tolerance we have so often seen occasion to admire; and doubts were expressed, whether they ought to take the oath of a member of some church, which, for any thing the Chamber knew to the contrary, might be heathen, or (which is always much worse in the minds of zealots) even heretical in their eyes. The *Goorurski Pravlayniz*, however, when he had heard all that the dissentient parties had to say upon the subject, asked the member elect, but in a manner little calculated to indicate doubts concerning the answer he might receive, or any fear of misapprehension of his meaning, whether he were a Christian; and when he had been answered in the affirmative, now addressing himself rather to the Chamber than the new member, he made these sententious remarks. "Whence," said he, "came all these Christian religions? There is but one God and one Bible; and all these varieties and forms must therefore be but different means of accommodating the same thing to the same end." And when no notice was taken of this speech, the *Goorurski Pravlayniz* proceeded to speak in a manner which I cannot but think worthy of being imitated by men playing a more influential part in the world's affairs. "Tell me," said he, addressing himself in a more particular manner to those members who appeared to be the most dissatisfied with the proposed admission of the stranger, "what is the difference between *Dominus* and *Gos-*

*podin?*" and when no one answered, he added, "wh the difference is just the same as that betwee Church of England and Church of Russia; that is, be tween two terms to express the same thing, which i Religion. Take his oath!"

Reverting to the subject of which we were speaking a friend called upon me one morning with the news o the day, which consisted of the report of what had ju occurred within the council chamber of the municip body, but which it is necessary to state, however, wa not at the time presided over by the *Goorurski Pra layniz* above mentioned. He recounted the incident a follows. Two newly-elected members, he said, had that day presented themselves to take the appointed oaths and their seats; and the permission for them to do this was stoutly opposed by my countryman. Whether Albinos had or had not been previously apprised of the election of these new members did not appear. But as soon as they stood before the body, he rose, and declared that he would not sit in company with men that not he alone, but every one present, knew could not be entitled to enter their chamber. But, before mentioning what followed, it is necessary to state who the elected members were.

These two men were both criminals that had been sent into exile for offences committed in Russia, but were more notorious for much greater, of which they were at least believed to be guilty, since their arrival in Siberia. They were both, whether by virtue of a pardon for the offences for which they had been exiled or not, I do not know, in the enjoyment of the rights of good Russian subjects. One of them was now building several brick houses, and was believed to be a man of considerable wealth. A year or two ago, however, this man had buried his wife; and in consequence of her death occurring very suddenly, suspicions had been en-

tertained that there was something more than natural in the event; and he had been called upon by the authorities to give some account of the manner of her death. He had some story of suicide ready; but his tale not only obtained no credit, but appeared to be so clumsily invented, that it even strengthened the suspicions; and an order was given to disinter the body and subject it to examination. Upon this taking place, not only was it found that there was a large quantity of arsenic in the stomach of the deceased, but also, that the body had received several wounds which were certainly inflicted by a knife or dagger. Either of these causes, it was proved, was sufficient to have occasioned death; yet still there was no proof of either who gave the wounds or who administered the poison. It was even found that the mouth of the deceased was injured in a manner which seemed to indicate that the poison had been administered by violence; which, more positively than the rest of the evidence, contradicted the only plea set up by the accused, that the deceased had poisoned herself. N vertheless, the laws of Russia, requiring direct evid ıce or confession, and these not appearing, the party, , occurs in many cases, was left an evil example to criminals to come.

The other of the members elect was a thief, whom Albinos had kicked out of his house on account of his wanting the fingers of one hand, which had been chopped off by a traveller with his tomahawk while quietly seated in a *sani* which the rogue had attempted to rob on the road.

Such were the men who now presented themselves to sit with the councillors of the civic chamber. No doubt all the honest men of the body immediately approved of the opposition made to their election. Nevertheless, quirks arose, and law and formalities were

spoken of, and other causes of hesitation, until these so warmed the spirit of Albinos, that he tore up his copy of a paper that was before the council at the time, threw the shreds into the midst of the chamber, and ran off in an honest huff, declaring he would not sit to hear a company he respected even deliberate upon such a question. It is proper to add, however, that the slumbering sense of honour in the civic body was awakened by this scene, and that the criminals were thrust from the chamber in a manner that did some credit to the members of which the body was composed.

While I was at Tomsk, I had the opportunity of witnessing the execution of the extreme punishment that, by the laws of Russia, is ever inflicted upon any criminal. A short account of the sad spectacle, will serve to complete the reverse side to that with which we began this little moral picture of the first Siberian town in which the traveller's sojourn afforded the occasion of making any observation upon the condition and character of the people.

But though the criminal law in Russia never condemns any one to death, I believe it is considered, that about two-fifths of those who receive the full number of lashes of the *plette*, or scourge, lately substituted for the *knout*, and less severe than that ancient instrument of punishment, succumb under the hands of the executioner, or die shortly afterwards, or, as it sometimes happens, at the end of several weeks. The criminal whom I saw undergo his punishment was a murderer. He had murdered his employer in this town, after robbing him, and in cold blood. There was no extenuating circumstance connected with his guilt; but, on the contrary, it was known by his own confession that this was the fifth murder that he had committed since his residence of a few years in Tomsk and its vicinity; and

he was sentenced to receive a hundred lashes, and to be branded both on the forehead and the temples.

A formal procession, which has been adopted, also in obedience to a new regulation, preceded the execution of the sentence. The wretched man was drawn through the streets to the market-place upon a high car, escorted by a mounted and foot-guard, and preceded by drummers, whose instruments announced the approach of the procession. He was seated, with his back to the horses, against a board, and with a chain round his waist; and upon his chest hung a board suspended from his neck, upon which was written in capital letters the word *Oobutza* (murderer).

Upon the spot appointed for the execution of the sentence, was erected a platform, with a railing and steps to ascend to it. Upon this lay an inclined plane adapted in dimensions to receive the criminal extended; and by this stood a tall stake, resembling that upon which martyrs as well as criminals formerly suffered in many Christian lands. When the procession arrived at the place of punishment, the murderer was unbound, and brought down from the car, and placed standing against the front of the platform, to await the arrival of the judge, whose duty it is to read the sentence at the place of its execution, and the officer that we should call the sheriff, the confessor, and the doctor. But neither, however, can the judge change the sentence, nor the doctor under any circumstances arrest its execution. A full hour passed before these officers made their appearance; during which time the criminal remained in the same position, and the executioner stood ready upon the platform. At length the judge, and the officer that represented our sheriff, came with some show of ceremony, and on horseback. As soon as they arrived they alighted, and the judge produced the written sentence, and commenced reading it uncovered; and the people generally,

who were probably in number about two hundred doffed their caps also.

At this moment, however, a little farce was acted that it is a pity should at any time be suffered to break the sad solemnity of such an occasion. Some dozen, perhaps, of the persons present had neglected, unquestionably by inadvertence, to remove their caps, and while the judge continued reading aloud in precisely the tone, as I could not help remarking, that the churchmen gabble their Sclavonic prayers, some soldiers after pressing into the crowd from behind on all sides, without any warning, snatched the caps from the heads of all those who had remained covered, and threw them upon the platform; which strange proceeding produced, of course, in all those whose temperament was not of the severest, the most unseemly merriment.

When the reading of the sentence was concluded, the criminal threw a handkerchief upon the ground, which it appeared was to solicit copeks from any charitable persons that might be present, to aid his recovery, should he not expire under the hands of the executioner, which was, however, expected, since he was to receive above the number of lashes considered upon the average to be that at which human sufferings cease. Nevertheless, he had in his favour a powerful and hardy frame. He appeared about forty years of age, and was of the middle size. His countenance was of that remarkably fine open character, that it was difficult to conceive could cover a mind into which a murderous thought had ever entered. Had, indeed, any one present not known where he stood, he might have thought he looked upon a martyr instead of the worst of criminals.

The executioner, who was himself a criminal, pardoned, according to the usage in Russia, upon his ac-

ceptance of the office he bore, had been all this time standing alone upon the platform; and he was the more conspicuous from being dressed in a handsome caftan. He now descended, and, with the assistance of a soldier, conducted the criminal, by the steps, to the platform. Here, he first bound him to the stake, but only to remain about ten minutes, apparently to give the spectators the opportunity of comparing his appearance before and after the execution of the sentence. From this the unhappy man was now removed; and the executioner, assisted by two soldiers, bound him to the inclined plane, with his head so drawn down beyond the upper edge of the frame, that it appeared as if it were impossible that he could escape suffocation.

The soldier now retired; and the executioner, after taking off his caftan, opened a chest that lay upon the platform, took out his fearful weapon, and then measuring the ground with his steps, placed himself in a favourable attitude to exert all his strength, and now stepping one foot forward with the exactness of a soldier on drill, gave the first terrible stroke. The scourge cut deep into the flesh. The blood spouted out, and the criminal's whole frame quivered as he uttered a most piercing cry.

The executioner continued his strokes at intervals of about half a minute, while a soldier below called out their numbers as they were given. Whether the manner in which the executioner performed his office was any refinement of his own, or regulated by the letter of duty, I did not hear; but the attitudes which he took, and the formality with which he continually wiped the blood from the tails of the scourge, and arranged these to do the most execution, could not fail to excite disgust in the most frigid; and had the offences of the sufferer been any thing less than five murders,

might have produced sympathy and pity for his sufferings.

After the fiftieth stroke, when the criminal's back was but a mere mass of raw and mangled flesh, with the blood running in a stream on either side of the board upon which he was bound, the executioner exchanged his gory scourge for a fresh one, with which he continued the operation with the same effect, and answered by the same cries, until the soldier called a hundred, when this part of the sentence was accomplished.

Preparations were now made for the branding. The arms and legs of the murderer were unbound, and the plane, upon which he still lay, which rested upon hinges at the feet, was placed in nearly an upright position. The executioner then produced his brand; and while the head of the criminal was held by the soldier, he placed the instrument upon the wretched man's forehead; and after giving it two strokes with his open hand, he covered the wound which it made with some indelible tincture; and after this he stamped both temples in a similar manner.

The murderer had his feet now unbound, and a trial was made whether he could walk; but as he was not able to stand, he was carried down the steps of the platform; and just as he reached the ground he appeared to be expiring. But some charitable person that was by, hastened to rub his face with some forcible restorative, and he presently revived. He was now thrown into a cart filled with straw, and conveyed back to the prison to await death, or his sufficient recovery to admit of his being sent to labour in the mines of Nertchinsk for the remainder of his days.

I must, in relation to the criminal law of Russia, here mention, that in the opinion of several sensible Russians with whom I conversed, the certainty of death, which the people of the peasant class of the country dread

more than men of the corresponding class in most countries, was the sole means to check the commission of the highest crime against society, which is of so common occurrence, at least in this part of the empire.

I shall venture to make a remark here concerning the advantage we might derive from introducing a part of the Russian penalty for this class of criminals among ourselves, in the event of our abolishing capital punishments. It has been ascertained, I believe, that since the abolition of the punishment of death in England for some inferior offences, these have considerably increased. If this be so, we may be far from that period at which the change sought to be introduced into the law, can be with a prospect of advantage by any means made. Whenever it may, however, prove otherwise, it will be worth the consideration of legislators, whether the branding, superadded to any other punishment that might be substituted for that of death, might not be at once a security to the public against the escape of the criminal from the confinement which it must be taken for granted he would be condemned to endure, and what is more than this, assure the wretch into whose mind the suggestions of murder had entered, of the certainty of his perpetual shame. He might hope to escape from prison, but never to erase the mark from his brow. No doubt it has not failed to occur to the minds of those who have more fully considered this subject, that we read, that "the Lord set a mark upon" the first man who committed the crime of which we are speaking.

## CHAP. XXVII.

### TOMSK.

Remarks upon the Cold.—Quantity of Snow.— Variations in the Temperature.—Comfort in-doors.—Means of guarding against the Cold.—The *Amossor*, or *Calorifère*.—Small Expenditure of Wood.—Remarkable Effects of the *Amossor*.—Dangerous if carelessly managed.—Usual Temperature.—Experiments upon the Mercury.—Arrangements for quitting Tomsk.—Excess of Cold.—Variations.—My former Companions.—Fellow-travellers.—Departure.—Meteorological Table, with Remarks.

I SHALL here make a few additional remarks upon the temperature of the atmosphere, and of the state of the weather during my stay in this part of Siberia, and upon the methods employed by the Siberians for defending themselves against the degrees of cold which they experience.

From the 24th of September, on which day I arrived in this town, for three weeks the weather was extremely variable, very often thawing during the day, but always freezing again at night, there being sometimes within the twenty-four hours a variation of from 8 to 10 degrees of Réaumur. Thus, although the thermometer had frequently indicated as much as 6 or 7 degrees of frost, yet as it thawed during the middle of the day upon the 16th, 17th, and 18th of October, the winter was not considered to be established until that epoch. These were however the last days of the sun's sensible influence, as will be shown by the register of the state of the thermometer at the end of this chapter.

When there is about 10 degrees of frost, the weather

is considered to be agreeable and wholesome at any time during the winter, and does not, as before stated, unless there be a strong wind, retain those within doors, who desire to drive out for mere amusement and the enjoyment of the open air. But though this degree of cold, with moderate care, is not attended with any danger or inconvenience, yet, with every degree beyond this, more and more caution becomes necessary. And if the cold exceeds the point at which the mercury freezes, or about 29 of Réaumur, and which is not an uncommon degree of cold during the depth of winter, it is then both inconvenient and dangerous, and must be regarded as a real enemy.

It will be observed by the register, that on the 29th day of October, which was not more than ten days after the last sensible influence of the sun's rays had been seen upon the snow, the thermometer had fallen to 17 degrees of frost, and that the cold again gradually decreased until the 3rd of November, when there was but 1 degree of frost, and that, on the day after this, there was again 17 degrees. The only inconvenience however, occasioned by the weather, arose from the quantity of snow that had accumulated in the streets and about the houses. There were no means of ascertaining exactly the quantity that had fallen, as it had always been accompanied with high winds, and had drifted into heaps and literally filled up all the enclosures between the buildings. The quantity indeed gathered around our dwelling, was so great during all November and December, that we had constantly a horse and cart and two men occupied in keeping the communication open between the different buildings belonging to, but detached from, the dwelling-house. Every one is obliged to clear the front of his house of this encumbrance as it collects in the streets, and to cast it into the river or the ravine which runs through the

town. Thus, the streets too were continually full of men similarly engaged.

After some further oscillations of the thermometer, on the 12th of November the cold reached 30 degrees; and, although the change had not been sudden, from some accidental neglect in attending to the fires at the prison, two men confined there were that morning found frozen to death.

On the 25th of November, it will be seen, the temperature had risen to 3 degrees of frost, but it again sank to 20 on the following day. After this, it generally oscillated between 10 and 20 degrees until the 7th of December, when it fell to 40 degrees.

Within doors, every inconvenience that we might expect to encounter in this climate, has here been striven with and overcome; and probably, in no country on earth is cold less felt than in Siberia, except when we are by necessity exposed to its influence without doors. The beau puts on his white kid gloves and dress shoes, and the belle her satin shoes and silk gloves, before leaving home to attend the dance, in winter as in summer. Slipping their feet into a pair of loose boots furred within, and wrapping round them a *schouba*, they glide from the heated air of the inner rooms, through two or perhaps three doors, jump into their *sani*, and are again in an atmosphere of the same temperature as that which they left, before they perceive any other effects of the cold, than the gathering of ice about every thing round the face, by the freezing of the damp air they breathe, upon the first object with which it comes in contact.

Most dwellings of ordinary dimension, of one story, and containing four rooms, and even dwellings of two stories, and containing eight or more rooms, are warmed by means of a single fire, from which every degree of heat may be distributed through the entire building

with a surprisingly small expenditure of wood. This is accomplished, by heating a mass of brick or stone work, upon the same principle as that already seen in the houses of the peasants, but without the oven, the cooking in the towns being almost always done in a separate building. This essential portion of every dwelling whatever in Siberia, is usually called by the Russians after the name of its inventor, an *amossor*, and sometimes by the politer sort when speaking French, of a *calorifère*, though it does not much resemble the great stove which has received that appellation in France.

The *amossor*, as it is better we should term it, ought to bear a due proportion to the dwelling, and is placed in the centre of it, and made to form a portion of the walls of every one of the rooms. It has a chamber left for the wood, resembling the proper oven before mentioned, but much smaller, and bearing, indeed, a very small proportion to the enormous thickness of the walls of brick or stone work. To this, there is a door in one of the rooms upon the ground floor; and near the inner end of the roof of the chamber, a narrow chimney or passage leads upwards through the mass of the *amossor*. In the chamber the fire is made. And by closing the door, and leaving a narrow hole open, a draught is created, which produces heat enough to warm the whole mass, which, provided it be not the first time of lighting, is accomplished in about an hour, with a mere double armful of wood, by which the house may be now thoroughly heated throughout. As soon as the wood is entirely burnt, care must be taken that the least flame whatever does not still burn, though the embers may remain red hot; and the door is now closed, and the chimney stopped by a convenient contrivance, by which all communication is cut off with the external air. The heated air is now concentrated within the interior of

the *amossor*, and having no other passage, finds its way by distinct apertures to the several rooms, into which the quantity required is let through a valve, and may be regulated at pleasure.

The *amossor* when lighted for the first time at the commencement of the cold season, takes from thirty-six to forty-eight hours to get thoroughly heated. After this, it is kept hot through the winter by being lighted for an hour once every day, in the manner above described.

In some houses the fire is lighted in the evening, and in others in the morning. The evening is generally considered the best, on account of the change of the air being more desirable for the night than for the day. The rooms are also then cooler for some hours; for it is remarkable that the full heat of the *amossor* is not thrown out until about eight hours after extinguishing the fire. Thus, by lighting in the evening, we have the highest temperature to proportion as we wish in the morning. When the attendants, however, are not to be fully depended upon, lighting in the evening is dangerous, as, in case of the chimney being closed, before the flame of the fire is completely burnt out, *asphyxy*, or temporary, and sometimes perpetual suspension of animation takes place. My plan for some time was, to light in the evening, on account of the advantage of sleeping in the fresher air. Some restless nights, and certain noises in the ears and headaches by day, however, at a time I was living alone in another part of Siberia during the winter, caused me to discover that my servant, who did not sleep in the house, wishing to get away early, had thought the consequences that he knew very well his negligence might occasion, of less importance than half an hour's time, which would have saved this inconvenience and the risk; after which I had my stove lighted in the morning.

Great care, nevertheless, is usually taken in all that concerns the heating of the *amossor*, and the distribution of the warmth throughout the house. In the larger houses of the wealthy, there is a servant kept, and in some even more than one, expressly to attend the fires.

The temperature kept up within the rooms of the Russo-Siberians is usually about 15 degrees of heat, though many indulge in 17, 18, and even 20 degrees or 77 of Fahrenheit. The aborigines, however, it will by and by be shown, cannot live in heat so great as even the lowest above mentioned.

During the severe weather, or when the thermometer is at or near 30 degrees of cold out of doors, a curious phenomenon is observed whenever the outer door of the house is opened upon an apartment into which the hot air has penetrated. As the air from without comes in contact with the heated air, it produces a dense atmosphere, which seems to rush in like a thick mist. And when the hall happens to be artificially lighted, the appearance is like that of a brilliant vapour, which however falls almost immediately to the ground either in water or fine snow.

I called upon a friend early one morning, after a conversation on the previous evening concerning the cold, to see an experiment which he had promised to make, to show its effects upon mercury when at a very low temperature. My friend now brought out into the yard a small cup containing several ounces of the mineral in its liquid form. This he poured upon the head of a cask, where it gradually congealed, until in about three minutes it had frozen and become as hard as a rock. Upon this, the experimentalist took a hammer and beat it into powder as fine as, and very much resembling, wheaten flour. While in this form, it was now scraped up and replaced in the cup, and brought again into a room at the usual temperature of about 15 degrees of heat, where, in

less than a minute, it reassumed its liquid form. What the exact degree of cold was when this experiment was made, we were not able to tell, as there was no spirit thermometer in the house; but we found afterwards, that the thermometer at the governor's indicated 36 degrees of frost at nearly the same hour.

It had originally been my intention to leave Tomsk, upon my journey into Eastern Siberia, very soon after the firm establishment of the snow ways. Several causes of detention, however, presented themselves, and which I was the less solicitous of overcoming, on account of the agreeable society which the government house, and the houses of the general and the proprietors of the mines, and those of some of my other good friends, afforded. The foremost of the causes that detained me was the want of an interpreter and servant, which my spare knowledge of the Russian language seemed to render almost indispensable. This want, however, I found impossible to supply. Nor was there any probability of my finding any one for some time travelling the same way, from whom I might expect any aid. However, I ultimately determined upon making the journey as far as Krasnoyarsk, which should occupy about three days, with the government courier, who departed weekly, and regularly when no obstruction arose from the state of the weather, or from the detention of the mail from Russia, with which he proceeded. I should at least by this arrangement have some experience of that mode of travelling. My gay companion so frequently mentioned, had left the town some time since for the mines upon the Yenessei.

The day I first fixed upon for my departure was the 8th December. But on that day the mercury was frozen; and upon my calling on some of my friends to take a last leave of their families, I found the degree of cold reported to be forty, which it will

be seen, by reference to the register, did not far exceed the truth; and as this is a degree at which no one, not under the most absolute necessity, ever at least commences a journey, and as the courier's *sani* was not well accommodated, and this was to be my first experience in travelling by this means in this part of the world, I was induced to postpone my departure.

On the 13th, the thermometer had gone down even to 8 degrees; after which it varied daily between 10 and 22 degrees until the 23rd of the same month; upon which day I left Tomsk, with no greater cold than that agreeable degree at which the ladies refrain from covering their faces when in the open air.

On the morning of my departure, the courier came to bring me the acceptable intelligence, that I was to have two travelling companions. The *sani* was properly adapted for two travellers only, who sat or reclined together with the courier; but in order to accommodate a third, the official had determined, favoured in his design by the state of the weather, to place himself side by side with the *yemstchik*, or upon the cover that protected the feet and legs of the other travellers.

My arrangements being made, I now took a final leave of my good friends at the houses I had most frequented, and of the two amiable ladies of St. Petersburg, with whom I had conversed almost daily in my native tongue.

But I must not omit on this occasion, to make a last mention of my companions of the former journey, both of whom I left established in their proper vocations. The merchant had commenced a retail trade in all the articles of merchandise imported into the country, and he expressed his contentment at his prospects of success; and as to the professor, nothing could have exceeded his good fortune; for he had scarcely arrived when the governor himself engaged him in his family. And I heard from the best authority, that he had gained more

control than he had formerly had over his love of champagne. And if he was not so gay as the merchant and myself had found him at Ikaterinburg, he was not so dull as when we were upon our journey to Tomsk.

The time appointed for our departure was near three in the afternoon, an hour before which, the travellers were assembled at the post office, awaiting the preparation of the mails, and, with the aid of the courier and the *yemstchik*, engaged in preparing the interior of the *sani* for the journey. We were provided with portable beds and other necessaries, in the same manner that the *tarantass* had been furnished on a former occasion; so that, save our being independent of one another, our *ménage* was much the same as that of the three travellers of the last journey, when they launched out upon the great Siberian steppe.

The travellers that were to be now my companions proved to be agents in the service of some of the mining proprietors. The courier introduced the parties to one another in due form. My first impression upon making their acquaintance was not very favourable. A friend, too, who came to see us off, discovered that they had been rioting all the preceding night and all the morning; and after he had conversed with them, he could not encourage me to entertain much hopes of finding them more agreeable company when the effects of their excess had quite passed away. It was true, that whatever might be their disposition towards sociability, we had not enough of any common tongue between us, to admit of our exceeding the narrowest limits of discourse. Yet it is wonderful how much may sometimes be done with a very few words and expressions of a language, when there is necessity or strong desire on the side of a stranger in the land, and good will and some intelligence on the side of the natives. And it was not the first time that I had been placed in the position of the former, and I

had never yet in Russia failed to meet the desired qualifications of the latter.

Every thing being ready for our departure, we received the word from the courier to take our seats in the *sani;* and as we placed ourselves in his vehicle, he seated himself upon a solid portion of the covering over our feet. The *yemstchik,* who had already mounted, now smacked his whip; and with three horses abreast, we dashed down the hill upon the brow of which the post office stood; and after passing at full speed through the town, we were soon amidst the solitudes of the Siberian plain.

METEOROLOGICAL JOURNAL KEPT AT TOMSK FROM SEPTEMBER THE 25TH TO DECEMBER THE 23RD.

| Date | | At 8 A. M. | | State of the Weather. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Degrees. | |
| September | 25 | - Frost | 2 | Fine clear weather. Wind N. W. |
| | 26 | - " | 1 | Ditto. |
| | 27 | - Heat | 1 | Ditto. |
| | 28 | - " | 3 | Ditto. |
| | 29 | - Frost | 2 | Ditto. |
| | 30 | - " | 5 | Snow. Wind S. W. |
| October | 1 | - " | 6 | Clear weather, calm. |
| | 2 | - " | 3 | Ditto. |
| | 3 | - " | 7 | Ditto. |
| | 4 | - " | 5 | Ditto. |
| | 5 | - " | 3 | Snow. Wind S. W. |
| | 6 | - " | 1 | Ditto. |
| | 7 | - " | 0 | Thawing during the middle of the day. |
| | 8 | - " | 1 | Ditto. |
| | 9 | - Heat | 1 | Ditto. |
| | 10 | - " | 2 | Ditto. |
| | 11 | - Frost | 1 | Ditto. |
| | 12 | - " | 3 | Clear and cold. Wind N. W. |
| | 13 | - " | 5 | Ditto. N. E. |
| | 14 | - " | 4 | Ditto. N. |
| | 15 | - " | 3 | Ditto. |
| | 16 | - " | 1 | Ditto. |
| | 17 | - " | 0 | Ditto. |
| | 18 | - " | 3 | Snow. Wind S. W. |
| | 19 | - " | 6 | Ditto. |
| | 20 | - " | 4 | Clear. N. W. |

METEOROLOGICAL TABLE—*continued.*

| Date. | | At 8 A. M. | | State of the Weather. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Degrees. | | | |
| October | 21 | - | Frost 5 | Clear. | | Wind N.W. |
| | 22 | - | „ 7 | | Ditto. | N.W. |
| | 23 | - | „ 8 | Calm. | | |
| | 24 | - | „ 6 | | Ditto. | |
| | 25 | - | „ 5 | | Ditto. | Wind N. |
| | 26 | - | „ 11 | | Ditto. | N. |
| | 27 | - | „ 10 | | Ditto. | N.N.W. |
| | 28 | - | „ 7 | Snow. | | S.W. |
| | 29 | - | „ 17 | Calm. | | |
| | 30 | - | „ 15 | | Ditto. | |
| | 31 | - | „ 10 | | Ditto. | |
| November | 1 | - | „ 10 | | Ditto. | Wind W. |
| | 2 | - | „ 3 | Snow. | | |
| | 3 | - | „ 1 | Clear. | | |
| | 4 | - | „ 17 | | Ditto. | Wind N.W. |
| | 5 | - | „ 10 | Calm. | Cloudy. | |
| | 6 | - | „ 6 | | Ditto. | Wind N. |
| | 7 | | „ 2 | | Ditto. | S.W. |
| | 8 | - | „ 1 | | Ditto. | S.W. |
| | 9 | - | Heat 2 | Clear. | | S. |
| | 10 | - | Frost 24 | Calm. | | N. |
| | 11 | - | „ 28 | | Ditto. | N. |
| | 12 | - | „ 30 | Two men frozen to death in the prison. | | |
| | 13 | - | „ 24 | Calm. | | |
| | 14 | - | „ 30 | | Ditto. | |
| | 15 | - | „ 26 | | Ditto. | |
| | 16 | - | „ 8 | | Ditto. | Wind N.W. |
| | 17 | - | „ 5 | | Ditto. | W. |
| | 18 | - | „ 2 | Snow. | | S.W. |
| | 19 | - | „ 6 | Cloudy. | | S.W. |
| | 20 | - | „ 10 | | Ditto. | N.W. |
| | 21 | - | „ 21 | Clear. | | N. |
| | 22 | - | „ 16 | | Ditto. | N. |
| | 23 | - | „ 10 | | Ditto. | N. |
| | 24 | - | „ 11 | Cloudy. | | N.E. |
| | 25 | - | „ 3 | Snow. | | S.W. |
| | 26 | - | „ 20 | Clear. | | N.N.W. |
| | 27 | - | „ 18 | | Ditto. | N.W. |
| | 28 | - | „ 12 | | Ditto. | N.N.W. |
| | 29 | - | „ 15 | | Ditto. | N.N.W. |
| | 30 | - | „ 11 | | Ditto. | W.N.W. |
| December | 1 | - | „ 17 | | Ditto. | N.W. |
| | 2 | - | „ 12 | | Ditto. | N.N.W. |
| | 3 | - | „ 8 | Snow. | | S.W. |
| | 4 | - | „ 10 | Cloudy. | | W. |
| | 5 | - | „ 15 | Clear. | | N.W. |
| | 6 | - | „ 20 | Calm. | | |
| | 7 | - | „ 40 | | Ditto. | |

METEOROLOGICAL TABLE—*continued.*

| Date. | At 8 A. M. | State of the Weather. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Degrees. | | | |
| December 8 | - Frost 35 | Calm. | | |
| 9 | - „ 30 | | Ditto. | |
| 10 | - „ 15 | | Ditto. | Wind N. W. |
| 11 | - „ 10 | | Ditto. | |
| 12 | - „ 10 | Snow. | | S. W. |
| 13 | - „ 8 | | Ditto. | S. W. |
| 14 | - „ 15 | Cloudy. | | W. |
| 15 | - „ 20 | Calm. | | |
| 16 | - „ 22 | | Ditto. | |
| 17 | - „ 16 | Clear. | | Wind N. W. |
| 18 | - „ 10 | | Ditto. | N. E. |
| 19 | - „ 15 | | Ditto. | W. |
| 20 | - „ 12 | | Ditto. | W. |
| 21 | - „ 10 | | Ditto. | S. W. |
| 22 | - „ 8 | Snow. | | S. W. |
| 23 | - „ 8 | Clear. | | W. |

## CHAP. XXVIII.

### JOURNEY FROM TOMSK TO KRASNOYARSK.

Departure from Tomsk.—Inconveniences of the Snow Roads.—Quantities of Snow.—A Village nearly buried.—Brutality of my Fellow-travellers.—Quarrel with every body.—Difference of Wine upon a Frenchman and Siberian.—Meeting a Caravan.—Russian Regulations about giving way when meeting on Snow Roads.—Warlike Courier.—Treatment of the Drivers of a Caravan.—Moral Causes and Effects.—More Caravans.—Damage our *Sani*.—Upset.—Courier wounded.—Admirable Qualities of the *Yemstchiks*.—Accident, two Men killed.—Further Upsets.—Change Places with the Courier.—Several Tossings in the Snow.—Dangerous Position of my Fellow-passengers from Drinking.—Coolness of the *Yemstchik*.—Remarks on the Character of Russian Drunkenness.—Bad Directors of Education.—Pleasant *Yemstchik*.—Better Roads.—Rapid Course.—Arrival at Krasnoyarsk.

On leaving the good town of Tomsk, we found the snow roads excellent; and, as the night approached, we were entering upon that stage at which the traveller begins to overcome his regrets, when they are not too lively, in relation to all he leaves behind, and to indulge in those anticipations which belong to the earlier portion of a journey. But as I was not able to communicate with my ill-favoured companions, or the parties in front of us, save only regarding matters of absolute necessity, I was left to enjoy my reflections alone.

Though the roads were good near the town, we shortly began to experience an inconvenience which is found in all countries in which I have travelled upon the snow, occasioned by ruts or trenches which are cut by the sledges and lie across the roads, and cause a jerking

d jumping of the sledge, which is disagreeable and iguing to the traveller. They are here, however, nfined to certain parts where there is much travelling. our Canadian colonies they are called cradle hills; in beria, *ouchabii*. They are worse in proportion to the ngth of the period of the cessation of snow; for whenver the snow falls they are filled up, and for a time e ways are again good. Towards the spring, however, which season there is usually less snow falling than the earlier part of the winter, they render the roads here there is much travelling, almost impassable. In proportion to the number of vehicles passing, they are worse in Siberia than in North America, on account of the "runners" or *polozia* of the sledges here being shorter, as before mentioned, than those of the American vehicle. The advantage would be incalculable, were the government to determine the length of the *polozia*, which should be in proportion to the dimensions of every *sani*, and at least, a third longer than that at present in use, and oblige every one to conform to the regulation.

This obstruction to our way however, which had been occasioned by the passage of some caravans, was but temporary; after which we passed smoothly and rapidly on. The country was generally plain; and dark firs were scattered at intervals, or formed groves, which were almost concealed by the snow that rested upon the spreading boughs of the trees. The road was generally a mere path but a very little broader than the *sani*; and we sometimes passed between walls of snow above our heads, as if we were upon a railway that had been cut through a solid rock of alabaster.

While it was still day, we passed by a village that was scarcely visible on account of the depth of the snow. On one side, the frozen element had drifted into heaps before the houses, that concealed every thing

but the points of their gable fronts, and on the other, banks of half the height of the houses were heaped up before them. The road was here like a deep trench from which numerous alleys cut in the snow on either side, led to the fronts of the houses or to the courts.

Before this first day of my new journey closed, I confess I was already beginning to get tired of the company of my fellow-travellers. One of them had a wooden leg, which he tossed about as if both his fellow-passengers had the same. And so far from their manners improving as the effects of their debauch went off, nothing could now exceed their coarseness and incivility.

Late in the evening, we arrived at the village of Semiloujnaya, at twenty-nine versts from Tomsk. Here I trusted that some occasion would arise to produce some sort of fellow-feeling between my travelling companions and myself. The reverse, indeed, I remembered well had been the after effects of the champagne upon the French professor, with whom I had made the last journey; but I believed, that national dissimilitude or perhaps prejudice, had some share in effecting the change I had on that occasion to regret; and, at least, I did not suppose that any such feeling towards an Englishman existed among the Siberians.

During the short space of time that we passed at this first station at which we stopped, my fellow-travellers contrived to quarrel with every one who came near us. They seemed, also, only to regret the difficulty they would have to encounter on account of the want of a common language, in case they made any trial to do the same with myself. I easily discovered, indeed, that I was already a particular object of their dislike; for I knew enough of their tongue to understand them distinctly, when they several times repeated words that I had frequently heard drop from the mouths of commer-

cial men of the inferior classes, and which I knew to signify that English spies ought not to be allowed in the country. I had no reason, however, to think they spoke in a political sense; but on the contrary, I doubted not that they alluded to what concerned merely the mines and the commerce and riches of the country. It was impossible, however, for us to dispute. Had I been desirous of resenting this want of courtesy, my tongue for all such purposes was a "stingless instrument." I therefore took no notice of any thing that the ill-mannered fellows appeared to say or do. Yet I never sat in company more disagreeable.

When we resumed our journey after this first relay, the atmosphere was loaded with a thin vapour, which obscured the sky, though the thermometer was at 15 degrees of frost; but the night, as the moon was above the horizon, was nevertheless light. We had the usual number of horses; and as the road offered no obstruction, we glided smoothly on our way; and we had not certainly made a verst, when I found my companions, who had eaten enormously and drunk together a bottle of cognac that they brought with them, had fallen at least into a state of insensibility. I was myself also disposed to repose; and, as every thing was obscured that the night offers of interest to contemplate, I disposed my bed and my furs, and after bidding good night to my more civilised fellow-travellers in front of us, I endeavoured to sleep.

Nothing, however, was further off than that balmy repose from which we awake to new life and fresh spirits. One petty adventure after another defied every thing but potations without measure, to induce forgetfulness; and in this I had no inclination to imitate my fellow-travellers. We first met the advance detachment of a caravan from the border town of China, proceeding with tea for the fair of Nijhni Novgorod of the coming

summer. It consisted of about twenty *sani* laden, and every one drawn by one horse. The ways are always narrow, and such as have been already described, upon snow roads where there is not constant travelling; and this renders it necessary when two parties meet, that one of them should get off the road, and plunge his horse or horses into the midst of a bank of snow, the bottom of which is probably two or three feet, and often much more, beneath the beaten way which forms the proper road, while the other party passes on uninterruptedly upon his smooth way. Thus a question arises, concerning which is to have the privilege of proceeding, and which must give way. This in a lawless country, would doubtless be decided by numbers, or by the reputation of the parties for dealing blows, or by an appeal itself to their weapons at hand. Siberia, however, though it wants many things needful to form quite the same state of society we enjoy in our Britain, wants not so important a law as to prevent any private strife upon these occasions. Thus, this question is decided by the relative rank of the parties; and, in order to ascertain this, when there is no uniform in either of the *sani*, and no other token of rank apparent, the two *yemstchiks* usually hold a peaceful parley to settle the matter. But when the parties are plain citizens, and wear no uniform, some difficulty arises; and were it not that the *yemstchiks* are the best-disposed fellows in the world, this would often, as it does occasionally, bring about between passengers of greater courtesy than those now asleep in our sledge a very warm dispute. In our case, however, not the slightest question could arise. Bells strung round our horses' necks and beneath the bow over the middle horse's head, announced, not our individual importance, but the approach of the Czar's servants on duty, and, early enough warned all those who did not actually wear

uniform which indicated higher services than that of our courier, that the sooner they plunged into the pit upon one side or other of the road the better. The case however, it must be confessed, was a very hard one for those we now encountered. Twenty horses must leap into the gulf of snow, with heavy loads behind them, that three might pass by, that were tripping along with a vehicle that glided as lightly over the way as a skater upon the icy surface of a lake. On this account, we ought not to have been surprised to find the peasant drivers of these loaded *sani* stop, as there could be no doubt, to see of what disposition our courier might be, or what amount of charity his passengers, in case he had any, might chance to possess, before they encountered so great an inconvenience.

One or two parties that we had previously met, with at least heavy burdens, had gone off the road before we came within a hundred yards of them, and we passed them half-buried in the snow. The number, however, of the present party seemed to have encouraged them to hope they might find some relaxation of the too rigid custom or law; and the drivers had all collected in front of the first sledge, for, as it was evident, a peaceful parley.

Our brave courier was armed with a broad sword in a bright steel case, such as we look upon in these comparatively peaceful days, rather with curious than belligerent interest; and I should as soon have expected to see it put to use against ourselves, as against any save determined robbers, who, however, are seldom known to attack a government equipage in any part of the Russian empire. Nevertheless, the *yemstchik* no sooner drew up in face of the caravan, than the warlike official jumped from his seat, sword in hand, and attacked the whole of the opposite party with a fury and success that nothing but a wolf in a sheepfold could have equalled. Some of the party ran one way and

some the other, and some plunged into the snow to escape the edge of the sword. But our agile hero pursued such as could not get far from the road, and with the back of his drawn weapon, dealt blows across the shoulders of several that were fixed in the snow, that brought forth the most piteous cries, not unmingled with tears. All prayed for mercy, and none offered any resistance, or even mingled any reproaches with their complaints. But nothing availed until the warrior, weary of conquering, put up his bright steel, and resumed his seat.

The scattered enemy now returned to their sledges, and, in their terror of another onslaught, with all possible diligence forced their horses and *sani* into the gulf of snow by the side of the road, to remain it was difficult to say how long; and our bells jingled again, and we went merrily on.

To all accounts of victories and defeats belong, not more the details of numbers and losses, than their moral causes; and this encounter ought not to be an exception. The easy victory in this instance, was neither to be attributed to the bravery of the conqueror, nor to any pusillanimity on the side of the vanquished. There was neither an act of courage nor cowardice on either side in the whole affair. The glory of the action was due to the uniform alone, which inspired the confidence of a single hand to make the attack on the one side, and the respect which caused the defeat and flight of twenty on the other. Yet an annalist of the bloodless, though not tearless victory, if he would pursue the moral further, might call in question the amount of honour done to the symbol of authority, by a combat between one subject with the signs of his service, and twenty as faithful as he, armed with the justice of their cause.

Before we had made many versts, we met the second detachment of the same caravan; and upon their stopping

at some short distance from us, as if in doubt what to do, our fiery courier, to whom their delay was like defiance, leaped again from his seat to attack them. But the foremost of this party had plunged, with his horse by his side, up to his middle in the snow, before the warrior reached him. There was, in fact, a general scramble who should bury himself first or deepest in the cold bed beside them. Some blows were nevertheless dealt again upon the less agile; but we passed on upon this occasion without experiencing any delay.

After a few more versts, we met a third detachment, the good drivers of which plunged into the snow before we came near them, and our heroic courier maintained his seat. A fourth detachment, which we also met, did the same as the last. But here a little accident happened to our *sani* which afterwards caused us much trouble, but which it was fortunate we did not perceive in time to admit of the vengeance it would certainly have brought upon the party which was the innocent cause of it. In galloping by one of the laden vehicles, which was not quite clear of the path, we knocked off a little appendage to the *sani*, which it is necessary to mention more particularly.

From either side of this winter vehicle, about a foot above the *polozia*, or runners, projects a sort of fender, consisting of a short piece of wood, which stands out from the side near the end, and a longer piece, in the form of the blade of a scythe, leading forward like a stay to the smaller. They are called *otvodi*, and they serve two useful purposes. They throw every thing off with which the *sani* comes in contact, or break the force of the blow; and they act as a third *polozia*, and prevent the vehicle upsetting in all but extreme cases.

While the road is level and clear, these appendages are of little or no use. But it happened that the caravan had so cut up the ways, that it now required

much management on the part of the *yemstchik* to prevent our *sani* upsetting. For the present, however, we kept upright. But after passing rapidly by another of these parties, who gave place at the sound of our bells, we knocked off the remaining fender, with as little consciousness of the mischief at the moment as we had had when we lost the first. And the road too was now so bad, that after some time balancing, first upon one side and then upon the other, we were tossed over into the snow, and so completely, that the *sani* lay in a position almost topsy-turvy. I had the good fortune to be the least encumbered as well as the least drowsy of the party; and I easily got out upon the road. But my less happy fellow-travellers, as they now recovered from the state of stupefaction in which they had hitherto remained, found themselves confounded with the baggage and beds; and, as if it were less important to extricate themselves than to exhibit their anger, they commenced a tirade of abuse against the poor *yemstchik*, who was still holding the reins tight in his hand, and aided by the courier, tramping in the snow into which he had been thrown and half buried, and endeavouring to reach the horses' heads.

The courier was the only one of the party that received any injury. One of his legs was sprained, but not enough to inconvenience him for the present.

It should be mentioned here, that among several good qualities possessed by the *yemstchiks* of Siberia, who are usually men taken from the peasantry of the villages, are great presence of mind and fidelity in cases of real danger, such as an upset, where, to abandon the reins, would lead to serious and perhaps fatal consequences. An accident occurred a short time since in the vicinity of one of the villages which lay in our way, on which occasion one of these men was drawn a verst upon the road after the *sani* had upset, without quitting

his hold of the reins, and at the end of which he mastered his horses and regained his seat. Another *yemstchik*, the year before, though less fortunate, had under similar circumstances held the reins until he was wounded and insensible. After this, his *sani*, which was firmly closed, fell, and drew the horses, over the bank of a ravine, by which two passengers, who had not been able to extricate themselves, as well as the horses, were killed. The bodies of these passengers were found with heavy baggage upon them, one, with the neck broken, and the other with a contusion on the stomach.

We were a full hour upon the occasion of this upset before we had our sledge again in right order to proceed, during the whole of which time my fellow-travellers amused themselves with abusing the poor *yemstchik*, who pointed out the disabled condition of the *sani*, but in vain. I was not sorry I could not understand the language they made use of, if their actions and gestures were suited to their words.

This adventure was but the beginning, however, of our troubles in this way. The road now became worse, and we soon turned a second time over. On this occasion I happened to be upon the wrong side; and I did not so easily disembarrass myself from the luggage as I had been able to do before. And now we had a second edition of the coarse torrent of abuse heaped upon the *yemstchik*. The courier, however, was the worst off again; for he had been sitting upon the portion of the *sani* that covered our feet, and was thrown backwards with his feet uppermost into the snow, and much bruised by the hood of the *sani* which passed over him.

When we were able to proceed, my fellow-passengers resumed their seats; but for myself, I gladly embraced the opportunity of getting out of their company, by changing places with the courier, who was now suffering

too much from his sprain and his fresh bruises together to be able to keep his seat outside.

After this the road somewhat improved, and we now glided bravely on without accident for several hours. The night, too, was still lighter; and after the exercise occasioned by our accidents, the cold seemed less; so that, by the side of the sole companionable being, as I could not help deeming the *yemstchik* to be, of all the party among whom my lot had thrown me, although we could not converse together, I enjoyed the change.

The road soon, however, became as bad as ever, and the *yemstchik* and myself were now four or five times thrown off our seats into the snow, which was here however heaped up too high on both sides to admit of the *sani* fully upsetting and discharging its interior freight; and the *yemstchik* always maintained firm hold of the reins, and easily arrested the course of our steeds. But on one occasion I was jerked off alone, and the *sani* had left me far behind, by the time the horses, which were at full speed, could be stopped; and there happening to be a declivity on the side upon which I was thrown, I rolled down twenty paces at least beneath the road before recovering myself; and I had great difficulty, with all my furs on, in climbing up to the road again.

But our troubles in this way were not even yet at an end. During the jerks of the *yemstchik* and myself from our seats outside into the snow, we heard nothing of the travellers within. There was a leathern curtain before the part where they were seated, adapted to close when necessary, but which, during the first part of the night had been only partially drawn. But upon the courier's entering the *sani*, this had not only been closed, but buttoned up in a manner that hardly seemed prudent after the vehicle had been twice regularly upset already. However, hearing nothing further of our fellow-

travellers, we trusted they were more comfortable than ourselves. It happened, however, at about two o'clock in the morning, while we were at full speed, that we came suddenly upon a part of the road that was more than ordinarily cut up by the loaded caravans, or more unlevel at the foundation; and this defect being concealed from the eyes of the *yemstchik* by the colourless snow, until it was too late, the *sani* went over again, for a third time, and deposited the *yemstchik* and myself in the snow as before. The horses were now stopped; and we soon stood upon the firm footing of the beaten track; but, to the surprise of both of us, not a word, not an oath, issued from within, though the *sani* lay completely on its side. The *yemstchik* however, without exhibiting any surprise, proceeded, before we attempted to set the vehicle upright, to unbutton the leathern curtain, which, as the fastenings were inside, was not to be done in a moment.

I confess I was at a loss to account for the silence within. The luggage could not but be quite overthrown, as it had been before; and, piled as the travellers must be upon one another, amidst all the loose beds and goods, it was impossible to suppose they could be tranquilly sleeping. We contrived to unbutton and withdraw the curtains, however, after some trouble; and certainly when I now saw three men huddled upon one another, speechless and motionless, I at first thought they were lifeless also. But the *yemstchik* did not betray the smallest surprise or doubts at what he saw, or hesitation what to do. *Nechavo,* "There is no harm done," said he, and proceeded partially to button up the curtains again, and then to make arrangements for setting the sledge once more upright. The three fellows were all in truth in that precious condition, to express which we are apt to seek a simile, in comparing men with the beasts, which however, we abundantly

dishonour in so doing, seeing that not one among them ever degrades his nature by depriving himself of the use of the spare portion of reason which has been given to him. The fact was, as we afterwards discovered, that after drinking all their own spirits, they had found a bottle of brandy of mine, which I had brought by way of precaution, and had not yet opened; and, after snugly buttoning themselves up, they had drunk away, until they had not left a drop in the bottle nor a particle of animation in their bodies or their minds.

Had there been at this time five or six more degrees of cold than we happened to have, we should have had some difficulty in preventing our drunken fellow-travellers from freezing to death. As it was, indeed, we were afraid to disencumber the *sani* of them, and lay them and the luggage on the snow, as we ought to have done had it been otherwise, while we set the vehicle upright, lest the frost might be greater than was apparent. We now therefore set about the necessary labour to put us again, if possible, upon the road, without turning any thing out of the vehicle. After untackling the horses, we took the shafts out of the *sani*, and made levers of them; and by this means, after about two hours of hard labour, we effected our object. This performed, we now secured the drunkards in the best manner we could, and resuming our seats, continued our way.

After this, as we proceeded we found less snow, and a consequent improvement in the roads; and we went steadily on, until we reached the village of Colionskaya, where we arrived after the sun was an hour high.

The half-dead and half-alive sots now alighted, with countenances that seemed more like those of fallen spirits in their most malicious moods, than such as should belong to honest men. The heroic courier, however, was entitled to some sympathy on account of

his former accident; for his leg had now swollen so much, that he was unable to walk without support.

We had here a breakfast of *stchee*, with good rye bread; and after a short delay, during which we partly repaired the damage to our *sani* which had caused us so many accidents, we continued our journey.

It may, perhaps, here be permitted to the traveller to make a single observation concerning the different effects of intemperance upon the two classes of the Russian people among whom we have seen this vice prevailing in the course of our progress—the peasantry, and the class who have received such a degree of instruction as ought to render them capable of showing a better example to their fellow-subjects deprived of this inestimable advantage. It should be premised, that the examples that have been seen, are believed to be fair specimens of the true character of this prevailing vice with these two classes. The question then suggests itself, seeing that the Russian government is extending education throughout the empire, regardless of any of those fears of the consequences which formerly belonged to all governments, without exception of our own: What effect is instruction to produce, if the direction given to it be not such as to diminish an offence against good manners and morals, now so prevalent throughout the empire? The peasant has no more idea at this day, that he commits any moral error, or any offence against society, when he indulges in his extraordinary draughts of *vodka*, to the waste of his means of comfort and of the improvement of his condition, than we have, when we drink the quantity of wine or beer that we take to nourish and strengthen us; whereas, men of the other class of drunkards, capable of knowing the degradation to which they subject themselves, yet incapable, from an omission in the mode of their education, of correcting this vice, lose with their good manners every claim to

civilisation, and exhibit one of the most degraded samples of a class of men, to be found in any part of the world.

Thus it must be the opinion of every reflecting person, that the prevalence of this vice among the peasantry must tend to arrest their civilisation, and among the class above them, to convert the proper elements of improvement into the means of the most extensive demoralisation. It would be better to arrest education altogether, or permit instruction to the sons of those alone who can send their children to the universities and higher schools, than leave unchecked this degrading vice among this class of the people.

The mists which had obscured the sky during the night, dispersed with the appearance of the sun above the horizon, and at noon, the cold had increased to 15 degrees, with a bright and cloudless sky. We stopped to dine to-day at the village of Podielnitschnaya, where we had much the usual fare, and the accustomed good treatment by the family of the officials, and the good fortune of finding neither *vodka* nor cognac; and we had the same advantage again at the post-house at Tiginskaya, where we arrived early in the night.

In consequence of the lameness of the courier, I had remained in the good company of the *yemstchik*, who was not, however, the same that had driven us the preceding night. I had parted with our tried friend with regret; but his substitute, who now conducted us, was an exact copy of my former companion, and as strict in his duty, and as great a contrast in disposition to the three drunken fellows behind us. When however he found I could not converse with him, and when nothing obstructed our way, or called for more than ordinary attention, he amused himself in alternately scolding and encouraging his horses — not in spare epithets such as we sometimes use, but in perfect

lectures, in long and short sentences—and at intervals in chanting airs, which, if they were rather monotonous, were doubtless his best, and I derived pleasure in listening to them.

The small quantity of snow that had fallen here, and the little drift to which it had been subjected, had left the roads especially good. The passage too of the caravan, seemed even to have benefited rather than injured them; and while the horses galloped at full speed, we seemed now to glide as smoothly over the surface of the beaten snow, as we might imagine the cars of the beings of poets' creations along the baseless ways above the clouds. We made a short stay at the village of Tchernoretschineschaya in the middle of the night, and at that of Bolschekemtschougskaya towards the morning, and at both of these there were stations at which we changed horses.

The third day of our journey broke upon us like the second, clear and bright; but with the cold augmented to 22 degrees.

We breakfasted about two hours after sun-rise, at the village of Mabokemtschougskaya.

As I had now been above six and thirty hours without sleep, I thought it proper to resume my place in the *sani*, in order to have the opportunity of reposing during the day; and more especially, as the cold was increasing, and probably would arrive at a degree before the coming night at which it would be desirable, if possible, to keep awake. The invalided courier too was better, and I did not think there remained any obligation for any further sacrifice of comfort.

The sun shone full in our faces, pale and without affording any sensible heat, as we renewed our gallop along the undeviating plain, and amid the same scene, which we were accustomed to behold, presenting nothing to relieve the eye, save a few stunted dark firs, which

were distributed with monotonous regularity, and wide apart, on all sides around.

On the fourth day, we breakfasted at the post-house at the village of Soledieva, and soon after, entered a country more hilly than any I had seen since passing the Ural Mountains. About noon we came upon the top of a hill, from which we obtained the first view of the Yenessei, one of the three great rivers of Siberia which empty themselves into the Frozen Ocean; and we had a view, at the same time, of the town of Krasnoyarsk, upon the opposite side of the river, at the distance of but three or four versts.

The sight of no place of repose could ever have been more welcome to a traveller, than to myself at least, was that of the town now within our view. We glided with great swiftness down the hill, and passed as rapidly over the ice of the river, which was swept clear of snow by the winds, and arrived at our destination early in the afternoon, myself at least, determined to make no more experiments in travelling with Siberian couriers.

## CHAP. XXIX.

### KRASNOYARSK.

Population.—Inhabitants.—Position.—Buildings.—The Traveller's Difficulties.—Incivility of the People.—A Day among Rogues.—Meeting with a French Merchant.—Change of Lodgings.—Drunken *Chinovnik*.—Arrival of Alcibiades.—Effects of evil Company.—The German Character.—Introduction to Gospodin Vassiliefski.—Character of his Dwelling.—Company.—His Amusements during the Winter.

KRASNOYARSK is the chief town and seat of the government in the department of Yeneseisk. It contains a population of between 5000 and 6000 souls; and it is the place of residence of a civil governor, who presides over similar institutions to those of Tomsk. Its importance, however, is chiefly derived from the residence of several of the larger proprietors, or their agents, of the mines situated upon the smaller streams of the Yenessei in its vicinity.

After the particular details given concerning Tomsk, it will suffice here to advert, in a few general remarks, to those particulars in which Krasnoyarsk differs from its more successful rival in population and wealth. After this, some few remarks may be made upon the society of the town as it presents itself to the stranger, and as it fell under the traveller's observation, during a fortnight's sojourn among those of whom it is composed.

This town is situated upon the right bank of the Yenessei, in a narrow plain between two ranges of hills, which probably rise about 500 or 600 feet above the level of the plain. The evenness of the ground upon which it stands has admitted of its being laid out and built with more regularity than Tomsk. It has three

handsome streets of detached houses, and has a more agreeable air than its rival city. The same prodigality of riches is seen however, here, as at Tomsk. One remarkable dwelling, belonging to Gospodin Mesnikeiff, and built by the government architect, is probably the most spacious and extravagant private residence to be found in the country. Its dimensions are 131 feet in length, 98 in breadth, and 52 in height; and it is of two stories, and furnished after the most elegant mode of St. Petersburg. The articles alone that were brought from that capital cost its owner between 6000 and 7000 pounds sterling.

The official or public buildings of Krasnoyarsk are similar to those of Tomsk. It has five churches, all of which are for the Russian ritual, and a cathedral in the course of erection.

The circumstances which immediately followed my arrival at Krasnoyarsk, were not calculated to give a stranger either a favourable or just impression of the character of its inhabitants. I was at this time still without any reply to my letter addressed to the British ambassador at St. Petersburg concerning my travels, and which, indeed, I could not receive before my arrival at the capital of the eastern government of Siberia. I knew I had, therefore, to depend solely upon the character of the Russians of the superior classes—of which, however, I had had already sufficient experience — for that degree of hospitality or politeness, without which, when we travel beyond the limits of more generally diffused civilisation, we can neither employ our time profitably nor agreeably. I had arrived, indeed, furnished with a letter written by my good friend, whose particular politeness during the time we were together at Tomsk I have already acknowledged, addressed to Gospodin Vassiliefski, a gentleman well known throughout Siberia, and engaged in the management of some of

the richer mines of the crown in this vicinity. On my arrival, however, the answer I received to my first inquiries was, that this gentleman was at present at the mines, and that he was not expected to return to Krasnoyarsk for several weeks. This news involved me in some difficulty. I knew there was neither an Englishman nor a Frenchman in the town, and also that there was no respectable house of accommodation for travellers: and I had neither servant nor interpreter. Nevertheless, I had heard that there was a German cook or confectioner settled here, whose house sometimes supplied the place of an hotel, and with whom I might possibly get accommodated. I therefore made my way to his house with all possible expedition, in the hope of procuring myself with a lodging of some sort. I thought that under any circumstances a foreigner settled in Siberia would be glad to see any stranger from Western Europe. I discovered, however, on my arrival at the cook's house that I had neither found a lodging nor a friend in my need. The man had no rooms to let for sleeping. His house was a mere place of resort for the votaries of Bacchus, by whom it was frequented both by day and by night. In this dilemma, and night approaching, I was nevertheless obliged to solicit the cook's aid, at advice at least, to enable me to find some kind of quarters until the next day. This, however, he flatly directly refused, out of the mere wantonness with belongs to that class of Siberians with whom, in spite of his birth or his descent, he was [illegible]. He would not even allow my baggage, which was in the sledge to be brought in, to wait until I could [illegible] this should pledge him to provide for me for the night. Fortunately, however, there happened to be a young man of the same origin in the house, who had "not yet lost all his virtue;" and he accompanied me in my search for what was to be obtained.

After walking about and making some inquiries, we entered a peasant's house, which was resorted to occasionally by *yemstchiks* and conductors of caravans, where I was able to provide myself with a room, in which I took up my quarters for the present. It was, indeed, a dirty dull hole, and had no furniture; but it was warm, and I was not in search of luxuries. I was provided with a travelling bed, and I did not care a farthing for any thing further.

My guide now left me, and the accustomed *samovar* and a tea-pot and tumbler were brought by a maiden, and set on the ground, and I placed my bed, rolled up, by the side of them, for a chair, and sat down upon it to prepare the refreshing beverage with that delightful feeling which is incident to the first hour of our escape from any sort of bondage of body or mind, and with as much satisfaction as if I had found a European hotel. After the *samovar*, the peasants brought me a mess of *stchee*, which formed a tolerable dinner and supper; and after another trip to the *conditorei*, upon the speculation of finding some person with whom I might chance to be able to converse, but without success, I spread out my bed and laid myself down for the night.

As soon as I arose the next morning, I should have waited upon the governor, had I not learned that his excellency did not speak any language in which I was capable of conversing, which induced me to determine to defer doing myself that honour until a better opportunity might offer.

During this day, matters however, began a little to mend. Upon again coming to the *conditorei*, I had the satisfaction of meeting a French gentleman, Monsieur Alabare, a merchant, who had been long settled in Eastern Siberia, and who was on his way to Europe to purchase merchandise to replenish his stock at Irkoutsk. This proved for me a most fortunate encounter, as

Monsieur Alabare was a man of that politeness, which, if the estimable attribute be less general among his countrymen than in a past age, we still remember, with hope, that when the revolutionary spirit of the nation has died away, it may again be known, and again distinguish a Frenchman in Europe. After inquiring where I was lodged, my new friend proposed to accompany me in his *sani*, which was at the door, to inspect my apartment; and as he spoke the Russian language fluently, and was necessarily well acquainted with the people, I gladly accepted his offer.

On our arrival at my quarters, a host of fellows covered with hair and sheepskins, assembled in my elegant apartment; and after my friend had held a parley with them, he assured me, that he considered the life of any one in possession of a few dollars, about as safe with a set of such scoundrels as he believed these people to be, as an unarmed single hand might be in one of the mines of the country worked by the worst of the criminals, who were only restrained by the bayonets of the mining corps from committing violence, even against one another.

The parley out of which this opinion arose had been rather long; but the result being known, no difficulty remained about the step to be taken; so I placed my pistols, which had been lying upon my portmanteau, in the girdle of my *schouba*, packed up my bed, paid what was demanded, and, aided by my friend only (for the rogues would not assist), carried all my effects out of the house to the *sani*, into which we now jumped, and drove back to the inhospitable *conditorei*.

As M. Alabare was in hopes of finding some one here that might still aid my endeavours to find a safer place to lodge in, upon our reaching the house, we left the *sani* and the property in it to the custody of parties known to my friend, whom we happened to meet at the

door, and directed our steps to the *conditor's* bacchanalian apartment, where we found assembled several persons of all descriptions of the inhabitants of the country, playing billiards and drinking champagne and *vodka*. Happily, however, and strange to say, among the *chinovnik*, several of whom were mixed with the rest, we found a young man civil enough to give us the address of a good woman with whom himself and several others lived; for whose house, therefore, we now set off immediately.

Where the uniform is found, which is dreaded by the worst, as much as it is respected by the better classes in Siberia, it was certain there must be some sort of security against the scoundrels with whom the place abounded. On our arrival at the good woman's, we found an apartment unoccupied, furnished with a table and two chairs, besides a frame for a bed, which were comforts not to be despised in such a situation; so I took possession immediately; and my obliging friend now left me, to continue his journey towards the Ural Mountains.

Our sufferings or our enjoyments of the hour are no doubt generally in proportion to the character of those that have preceded them. And certainly, when I now contemplated the luxury of my apartment, full of light, and passing clean, and furnished as above described, I wondered at my yesterday's enjoyment of a chamber dark as Erebus, very dirty, and with no furniture at all, and almost the common passage of hairy rogues, with countenances as little like those of Christian men, as the apartment was like any thing that could under other circumstances than the immediate escape from such company as I had eaten, drunk, and slept in for several days and nights, have afforded enjoyment to the most weary traveller.

But notwithstanding the luxury and tranquillity that

I now enjoyed, such is the difficulty of supporting solitude—and to this at least I seemed now condemned—that I was not displeased when, early in the evening, two sottish-looking *chinovnik*, who were living in the house, came to my room to invite me to theirs, and I even gladly accompanied them.

In the apartments of my fellow-lodgers were assembled about twenty of the same sort of characters as those that riot nightly in all the towns of Siberia at this season upon the gains of summer, and who have not escaped notice in a previous page, and about half that number of the gentler sex. Some were dancing, and some were drinking *vodka*, and some were playing antics such as might suit very well the domestics of the god of wine, among whom, if the deity have an apartment beneath his own grand hall, we may suppose wanting the lute and the poetry, which should refine or draw something from the grossness of celestial as well as terrestrial bacchanals above stairs. I succeeded, however, in making my escape from this precious company at a tolerably early hour, and now laid myself down for my second night at Krasnoyarsk.

The next day, the hope of meeting some one with whom I might converse, carried me again to the *conditorei;* but I found no one. In the evening, however, I made another visit to the same house; and on this occasion I began to glean some useful information concerning the place; and I heard, what much interested me, that the governor's lady was acquainted with the French language, which determined me to make a visit the very next day at the government-house, where I trusted I should at least hear something of the return of the gentleman to whom I had been addressed by my Tomsk friends.

But while I was engaged over a tumbler of tea in an inner room, in obtaining what little information I could

draw from these unaccommodating people, suddenly from the chamber of Bacchus, reached my ears, we open to the sound, the loud shout from many voices of Alcibiades! Alcibiades! and feeling tolerably sure that there could not be two parties entitled to that name in the land, I hastened to the spot, and had the unmingled gratification of meeting my veritable friend. Alcibiades had arrived that very moment from the mines; and at his appearance among the bacchanals assembled, the whole party had suddenly given expression to their joy by the shouts of his name that had been heard through the house; and as I entered the room, a dozen of the tribe were around him, congratulating his arrival. My own joy, indeed, when I shook hands with my friend, could not have been inferior to that of any one of them, though it was mingled with regret at finding so estimable a man in company apparently so objectionable. Nevertheless, the appellation chosen by the *savants* of Tomsk was herein not the less justified. Not less than the genius of Athens, to whom they had compared their countryman, was the genius of Siberia, capable of accommodating himself to every phase of society which the time and circumstances presented. Nor has vice, less in here than in Greece, sought to cover its ugliness by the seduction of those esteemed for the most estimable qualities which men possess.

My friend, who had already called at Gospodin Vassiliefski's, had heard that a foreigner and stranger had arrived in the town; but as I had not been there, he supposed it impossible to be the same to whom he had given the letter above mentioned. Not however having heard of any other foreigner being in this part of Siberia, he had come to solve the mystery; and upon now reproaching me for not having presented my letter, he was surprised to hear that I had been positively told by those who pretended to be correctly informed, that

his friend was at the mines, where, however, it appeared he had not been for some time. In fact, the information I had received turned out to be a mere invention of the malicious inhabitants of the house in which we were, who, from the habit of doing acts of incivility, took as much pleasure in committing the most wanton, as probably their fathers took in the land from which they came, in doing acts of politeness and kindness. It is only those who have had more than ordinary opportunities of observing the extremes of human character which the world affords, that might believe how often evil is committed for the pleasure alone of committing it. Before I visited Siberia, I thought the German character beyond the power of circumstances to change, since it has been found so little altered in Europe by the moral changes incident to the advance of physical science and the decline of poetry, which, so lately as even to be remembered by the present generation, quite adjusted the pulse of humanity. Nevertheless, those Germans of this class who reside long enough in Siberia, become not less corrupted than the adventurers from countries where the same class of the people are far less known for their inherent honesty and stability of character.

My friend now proposed driving me to the house of Gospodin Vassiliefski, to make the acquaintance of his friend; and as his *sani* was at the door, we set off without delay. We found the gentleman at home, and I received from him a hearty welcome. He was highly indignant, but not surprised, at the treatment I had received; and as he kept us for the rest of the evening, I had the pleasure of an introduction to his wife, a very young and pretty woman, with her first child in arms, and also of meeting several of his friends, among whom were Gospodin Dentu, the government architect, now employed in building the cathedral above mentioned, and a young gentleman of noble family, and from

Russia, engaged with Gospodin Dentu in the study of his profession.

Gospodin Vassiliefski's house was a model of neatness, which it would be well were it imitated by the millionnaires of Siberia; and in one of the rooms into which we were introduced, there was yet a more desirable example for the imitation of all those whose time hangs heavily upon their hands during the winter months. This was a lathe, in the use of which, judging from the specimens to be seen in every part of the house, my new friend appeared to be very skilful. Certainly no pursuit could be better adapted to procure at the same time both exercise and amusement.

I did not leave Gospodin Vassiliefski's after this first visit, without receiving a pressing invitation to take up my quarters with him; which, for the present, however, there being no real necessity for so doing (the luxury of my present apartment considered), I begged and obtained leave to decline.

## CHAP. XXX.

### KRASNOYARSK.

**Visit** to the Governor's.—Dinner at the Government-house.—Russian and Siberian Music.—Evening at the House of an Exile.—Family of the Exile.—Their Condition since their Arrival in Siberia.—Treatment of the Family by the Government.—An Exile's Wife.—Traveller forcibly removed to a Friend's House.—Cathedral.—Loyalty and Piety of the Siberians.—Origin of the Cathedral.—*Soirée* at an Architect's.—Christmas Amusements.—Ghosts.—Tragedy.—Merry Belles of Krasnoyarsk.

THE next day, Gospodin Dentu, who was a gentleman of French origin, but whose family had been long settled in Russia, called upon me to fulfil an engagement which he had voluntarily made on the previous evening, to accompany me in a visit to the government-house.

We found the governor at home, and I was received with great kindness. We had for the present, however, only a little general conversation with his excellency upon the ordinary topics of travelling; but we received an invitation to return at the dinner hour the same day.

My new, obliging friend called for me at the appointed time, and we drove again to the government-house, where we found a small party assembled; and I had now the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the wife of his excellency. The lady was the daughter of a late Governor-general of Eastern Siberia, at this time administering the government of the western departments, and she was in the flower of youth and

beauty, and possessed of European accomplishments. As soon as dinner was over, the chief part of the guests that had been at table, according to the custom of the country, retired. But it happened that my friend and myself broke through the rule on this occasion. The governor had a valuable collection of Siberian curiosities, which he brought out for inspection. Among them, not the least curious, were some idols of the nation of the Tungouze, with one of which his excellency presented me, as a memorial of my visit to Krasnoyarsk. After this, the lady favoured us with some native Russian airs, which she sang, and played upon the pianoforte with great taste and feeling. One of them was more lively than the airs of her country in general, but was interspersed with very grave variations, in mimicry of the monotonous strains of some of the wild Siberian tribes.

The following afternoon, I was taken by the same friend, to the house of one of the more remarkable of the political exiles who had been concerned in the last insurrection in Russia, and who was residing in an humble abode about two versts from the town. It was the *fête* day of one of this exile's family, and we wished to arrive before the hour of the gathering of his friends, which would be sure to take place in the evening. Fine snow, which had been falling for several days, was now drifting; and as no road was apparent, it was with much difficulty that we made our way. Upon approaching the house, we found it buried to the roof by the snow on one side, and nearly concealed by a bank formed on the other. After much difficulty, and aided by a part of the family, whom we found busily occupied in opening a way through the snow, we succeeded in gaining an entrance. We were received with the warmest feelings of welcome by the exile and his lady, with whom we had a long and in-

pressing conversation before any other guests arrived. The parties, however, began to make their appearance with the close of the day; and the gathering soon consisted of the *élite*, of all ages, of the good folks of Krasnoyarsk, including all the parties already mentioned, except those of the government-house; and we had now the usual amusements of dancing for the younger sort, and conversation for those of riper years or graver mood.

My curiosity was great on this occasion, as it was the first time I had entered the house of any one of the proper exiles since my arrival in the country. The house was a small and comfortable habitation of one story, and was very neatly and appropriately furnished. Besides the room in which the young people danced, there was a small apartment, where the lady of the house sat and entertained such of her guests of her own sex as at intervals retreated from the larger apartment to give freer scope to the dance; and another, where the greater portion of the gentlemen that were not disposed for the lighter amusement, conversed and smoked the *chiboock*.

Previously to his exile, our host had been an officer of rank in the imperial service; and as he had not very often the opportunity of meeting any one lately from Europe, there was plenty of scope for conversation. It was now a tranquil epoch in Europe. "Contention," though so soon to appear, had not yet "madly broke loose and borne all down before it;" and the news, commonly so called, which I had to communicate, was very scanty. The chief contribution, indeed, in this kind, on my part, consisted rather in correcting some extraordinary misapprehension of things in my own country, springing from reports found in French newspapers, which, as if they were the safest of all the publications in Europe of the same description, alone reach Siberia. On the

other hand, the exile related to me "a tale of times long past, but still with woe remembered," before he passed the fatal mountains which he is doomed never to recross; and he gave some account of his feelings and of his position with a single observation upon the origin of his misfortunes, which may be reported without any violation of that confidence which communications, without any such conditions, may nevertheless enjoin.

The exile had been a colonel in the army of the Emperor Alexander, and had made the campaign of 1812. We are all familiar with the history of that campaign; and there are few who do not know something of the moral effects of the occupation of Paris upon the Russians, and that a certain portion of that political philosophy which subjects the reason to the government of the passions and the fancy, was imbibed by some of the more enlightened and enthusiastic of the Russians during their stay in France. Among these, was this former soldier of the empire, now an exile in Siberia. He was then young, and susceptible of every feeling that touches the imagination. But now, near the grand climax of life, he was of opinion that the attempt for which he suffered with others, would in the future annals of Russia, exhibit no proof of the good sense of the Russian people of this age. He had been condemned to labour for life in the silver mines of Nertchinsk, and his wife had voluntarily followed his fortunes. He remained, however, but fourteen months in that part of the country, during which time he never descended to the mines. He had worked dressed in the suits provided for prisoners in his position; but his treatment had been mild, and the labour light and scarcely constrained. At the end of the above period he had been permitted to live in one of the villages in that vicinity, where he remained five years. After this, he was

lowed to inhabit any town in Siberia which he should himself choose, and he had fixed upon Krasnoyarsk.

I had been informed, that he was one of the exiles that had borne his fortunes with the least fortitude; and this led me to ask several questions, which elicited the following observations. He said, he believed that he supported his exile with less patience than the greater part of those who were subjected to the same trials, but that he could not attribute it to any other cause than his peculiar disposition, which was naturally energetic. His treatment, he said, was the same as that of the rest, and on that score he could not complain. He said, indeed, that it was impossible for it to be milder than it had been from the beginning, consistent with the conservation of the principle, for the attempt to overthrow which he suffered. His sole constraint, he said, also, now consisted in his not being permitted to return across the Ural Mountains. Indeed, he informed me, that he had received favours at the hands of the government, in regard to his family, that were much above his expectations; and, that two of his sons that were born before the event for which he had been banished, and who, by the law, should suffer perpetual exile, had received commissions in the army; and that a third, born in Siberia, was at present a cadet in one of the military colleges of Russia, and in the way of advancement. Besides these three sons, this exile had two daughters of tender years, and a boy who was deaf and dumb, to all of whom this snow-girt cottage had been their only home.

With the lady I had also much conversation concerning what had passed during twenty-three years that they had been in exile. And, although no such obligation as that above mentioned can be supposed to have been the condition of her communications, yet from a consciousness of being wholly unable to re-

produce them effectively, or to give a just account of the feelings of a wife and a mother, for so many long years the voluntary companion of her husband in exile, I shall forbear to make the attempt.

The lady's appearance was still so youthful, that she must have been in the very earliest years of womanhood at the time she crossed the fatal mountains, without a hope of ever returning. Her countenance indicated no suffering. Indeed, in some of the tones of her voice, and her manner of speaking, there appeared a degree of established cheerfulness, rather than of patience, which formed a great contrast to the anxious demeanour of her husband. And when I mentioned to my philosophical friend, who was present, that this particularly struck me, he said that he had noticed the same thing long before, and thought it unaccountable in her position, until he discovered, as he believed, that it arose from, and was at once the means and the effect of, administering consolation, and of calming the less patient spirit of her husband, which had been the occupation of her life since the epoch of their exile.

Upon the morning after this little gathering, Gospodin Vassilliefski came to my lodgings with a determination to remove me to his own house; and, as his servant entered directly into my room without any ceremony, to take up my effects to transport them to the *sani*, which was at the door, there was no choice left; so I accepted this good Russian's hospitality, and became now established in his dwelling for the rest of my stay at Krasnoyarsk.

The same day, Gospodin Dentu came to fulfil a promise he had made, of showing me the cathedral already mentioned, which he was constructing. The weather was fine and milder than usual, and he was desirous that we should not lose the favourable opportunity. The building was at this time finished ex-

ernally; but little labour had yet been bestowed upon the interior. It is a noble edifice, and of such dimensions and architectural beauty, as to strike all who behold it with wonder, at seeing so grand an edifice in the midst of so scanty a population.

The length of the new cathedral is 187 English feet, and its breadth 96 feet, without taking in the projections which form, at least, the similitude of the Greek cross, but which are not in this instance undue, or sufficient to break all harmony in the design, in the same degree which is observed in the greater part of the Russian churches. The height of the tower in front of the building is 198 feet, and that of the dome 182. It has three great entrances, and the socle or saale is of cut stone, and ten feet in height, and forms a base of great stability to the building.

The account given of the origin of this cathedral involves a little history well deserving notice, as affording an instance sufficiently illustrative of the prevailing feelings among the Siberians as well as among the Russians; while it serves, at the same time, to show that the prodigality of the Siberians is not wholly confined to what only tends to the gratification of personal importance, or the enjoyment of sensual pleasures.

The account was given me by the architect, while we were inspecting the cathedral. It appears that all the *fête* days of the imperial family, whether they are the anniversaries of birth or marriage, or the contracting of marriage, or of the sovereign's coming to the throne, are celebrated, and probably with more warmth, in these remote provinces, than in the capital cities of the empire. Now it happened, after the announcement of the birth of the eldest son of the present heir apparent to the throne, that a large party of proprietors

and agents of proprietors of mines, had assembled to celebrate the event, when the display of luxury and riches, led one of the party to compare the condition of those present, with their estate at the epoch of their arrival in Siberia, which most of them had entered with little, and some of them with nothing, beyond their spirit of enterprise and adventure. This led to a suggestion from one of them, now a wealthy proprietor of mines, that they ought to raise a temple to God, in testimony of their gratitude for the riches he had vouchsafed them. The suggestion was happy; and the chief chord of the Russian heart-strings was no sooner touched, than a proposition of one of the party, that the temple ought to be a grand cathedral dedicated to St. Nicholas, in honour of the new-born infant whose name had been announced with the news of his birth, was responded to by the universal assent of those present. Thus a subscription of 1,500,000 rubles assignat (about 60,000*l.* sterling), was at once entered into, of which 600,000 were put down immediately.

I spent the same evening at Gospodin Dentu's, where I met all the parties with whom I was previously acquainted, and several others. The company were distributed in two rooms, one of which was properly that of the gentlemen, and the other that of the ladies. Our host kept the men occupied, whether grouped in parties for conversation, or playing cards, or dozing over the *chiboock*, while his lady attended to her guests of her own sex. Not, however, that this disposition of the company was, or is at any time in any of the houses quite arbitrary. Every one passed at intervals from one room to the other, just as he or she thought proper. The studio also of the architect was open, where those whose taste disposed them to enter, found ample amusement. Nothing could exceed the ease and

comfort that prevailed, which contrasted to great advantage with the ceremony and the luxury and waste seen in some of the houses of the millionnaires. Our host was proud of his Gallic origin, and in his entertainment, was mingled the politeness of ancient France with the Russian unaffected hospitality; and every thing indicated an assurance on his side that his guests enjoyed themselves, without regard to the splendour of the entertainment.

At these social meetings, which continued during my stay at Krasnoyarsk, there were some little variations in the amusements, which are wont to be introduced at this season of the year, that were not unlike those known at the same season among ourselves, in some parts of the country.

One evening at Gospodin Vassilliefski's after the windows of the principal room had been closed up by the embanking of the snow during the day, which had rendered us duller than usual, in spite of one or two guests present, and while we were sitting distributed about the room, the door slowly opened, without the sound of a footstep, or the jar of lock or hinge, and a tall pale figure with fixed and glaring eyes, and robed in pure white, stalked majestically in, and needed no use of speech to be recognised for one of the spirits from the realms of the departed.

The apparition with "slow and solemn march," measured the room twice; and, if we were not quite "distilled to jelly with the act of fear," still nobody interrogated it, and it neither spoke, nor "addressed itself to speak." But, though menaced by no show of violence, nor alarm of cock-crow, when, with noiseless step it had thus twice paced the chamber, it shrank slowly away, and the door closed again as mysteriously as it had opened, and nobody knew more than they saw.

Another evening, when there was a larger party assembled, a whole troop of masked actors made their appearance, and performed a tragedy, the subject of which, by the prologue, was the slaughter of the Infants by King Herod. But, however the drama was managed, the stabbing and dying were confined to the chief actors of the piece, and no one found the story quite plain enough to understand. Who the actors were, was also uncertain, though an officer that was present believed that he recognised the voice of one of his warrant-officers.

On the same evening, a similar party entered, and enacted a historical piece of more agreeable interest. The subject was the crowning of a great King of the West, who had come from England to the Russian capital to receive his crown at the hands of the Czar, to whom, it is thought by most good Siberians who do not happen to be students of history or international relations, that all kings and princes owe their crowns and pay tribute.

Upon another evening, at Gospodin Dentu's, while we were merrily occupied in playing forfeits and other such games of the season, three immensely stout women entered, masked, and dressed in sheepskins, and in the furred boots which the peasant women wear when out of doors. Two of them danced, and, notwithstanding their dimensions, so lightly as to excite great curiosity to know who they were. This set the gentlemen to work to bar up the doors to stop their retreat, and to make endeavours to discover to whom they were indebted for the voluntary ballet. Upon this the bulky strangers fell to beating some of the too inquisitive parties, which led to a thorough scene of riot, and mirth, and laughter, which amused us for some time. Nevertheless, the two dancers being effectively imprisoned, danced

gain until, in the midst of their steps, one of the masks ell off one of their faces, and the other dancer out of harity pulling off hers, and the third of the party doing he same, they were found to be two of the belles of Krasnoyarsk, under the protection of one of their mammas; and one of them was by birth a Kamtscha dale.

## CHAP. XXXI.

### KRASNOYARSK—*continued.*

The Mines of the District.—Streams upon which the Gold is found.—Effects of mining upon Agriculture and Commerce.—Advantages of some Districts.—Ill-adaptation of the Russian Character to settle the Country.—The Frost in the Ground.—The Soil.—Gardens at Krasnoyarsk.—Probable Destiny of the Town.—Causes.—Alarm of Arrest.—Difficulties of prosecuting these Travels.—Arrangements for Departure.—Companion opportunely procured.—Taking leave.—

As this was not the season at which the mines are in operation, I did not visit any of those in this vicinity; but I am indebted for the following particulars to the politeness of my friend Gospodin Vassilliefski, the superintendent of the government works throughout the district.

These important mines, exceeding those of the Ural in the riches which are drawn from them, are situated upon the tributaries of the grand River Yenessei. The most important of them lie along the shores of the two minor tributaries, the Octalick and the Kalami; and it is a remarkable fact, that in almost all cases these deposits of gold in Siberia, whether in beds of gravel or of sand, or amidst the quartz, are found upon such tributaries of the grand rivers, as are of the third or fourth grade, not in relation to their comparative magnitude or volume of water, but to the degrees by which they are removed from direct intercourse with the main stream.

The richest of these mines is situated upon the Octalick, which is four degrees removed from the main stream of the mighty river, into which its waters ulti-

mately fall by one of the larger tributaries, the River Pit. The mines upon this little stream occupied last year 12,000 labourers, nearly all of whom were exiles, and produced 100 pouds of gold in 212 days. The wages of the men, who, whether exiles or Siberians, are all free, and paid alike, are from 300 to 400 rubles for the season, and their board. In former years their wages were less, and provisions were cheaper; but since the augmentation of the gold works, the raising of cattle and the cultivation of the land have been much neglected; and now beef, which is the chief article of their consumption, has risen nearly 100 per cent. in value; and it has, moreover, for the most part, to be transported from a much greater distance than that at which it was obtained formerly. The price of this article was ten rubles the poud, or about twopence halfpenny a pound; and it was not to be obtained within the distance of a thousand versts from the seat of the mining operations. Some advantage, however, is derived from the famous fish, the nelmar. But that fish is not so abundant as in the Irtysch, where, it will be remembered, we found the means wanting to procure it.

The state of the mining operations, however, does not afford the only instance in which the interests of the country have suffered from the unequal march of agricultural pursuits with those which produce more immediate, though less solid advantages. The commerce with China has been directly affected by the scarcity of provisions; and every institution which the state of society has admitted has felt proportionate effects. It was said, however, to be the intention of the government to take a decisive step towards augmenting the agricultural population, by the introduction of a steadier and better class of men than have hitherto settled in Siberia.

The southern districts offer abundant advantages from their incomparable soil and somewhat milder climate. It is doubtful, however, whether such a population can be obtained from Russia. The Russian peasant, seen even under the disadvantages of serfdom, is nevertheless known to be by nature too full of the spirit of adventure and love of change to embrace voluntarily the tranquil course of life and steady labour necessary to success in the cultivation of the soil; and he is as certainly deficient in that knowledge of the art which, by making its free pursuit attractive, might change his habitual inclination, and ultimately render the occupation both agreeable and profitable. Moreover as serfdom could not be introduced into Siberia, where it never existed save in the case of a few domestic servants, it is probable that only in searching for and encouraging emigrants from countries less thinly populated than Russia, and of a race which could not conveniently, at least for a long period, mingle with the Siberians, the object might at the present day be accomplished. Out of the 10,000 criminals and vagabonds that annually cross the Ural Mountains, it is most probable that not a hundred have either the knowledge or the disposition necessary to the success of agricultural pursuits. In this vicinity, however, it must be confessed, the efforts of the most steady and skilful husbandmen would not be productive of adequate results. The frost here never wholly leaves the earth, though the surface thaws to various depths, depending upon the particular position of the ground. In places sheltered from the north winds and covered with deep banks of snow in the winter, and exposed to the rays of the sun in summer, the ground thaws to the depth of three, and sometimes four feet. But in places that have not this advantage, it does not thaw more than from one to two feet, and even in some cases not more

han a few inches, according to the more or less dry or moist character of the soil. Even here, however, as I had myself the opportunity of seeing some proofs upon pots of ground from which the snow had drifted, the soil is excellent, as well within the town as throughout the country around, save a scanty gravelly portion which borders the river.

Some of the better houses of the town have gardens. The cherry, however, was the only fruit that was cultivated. It is very good preserved, though small. Of the culinary vegetables, some grow very fine cabbages, radishes, and a few of a small kind of beans and peas. When the nature of the soil, then, is considered, and the extreme heat during the short time that the summer endures, here it is evident that more skill to adapt the culture of the soil to the character of the climate would be found much to increase its present scanty production.

The causes of the uncertainty attending the progress of this city, above alluded to, lie rather in its geological than its eastern or western position, or its latitude. Placed upon the banks of the river, in a narrow valley between two ranges of sterile hills, it is subject to very high winds at all seasons, which render it both unhealthy and disagreeable as a place of residence. In summer, clouds of sand and dust sweep through the town with such violence as to render it almost impossible for the inhabitants to stir abroad; and in winter the snow is in perpetual motion; and very often some of the houses are absolutely buried by the drift, when there is not enough snow upon the open ground for the *sani* to run upon. These are matters so important to a town in a climate like that of Siberia, that it is thought they are sufficient in themselves to warrant a belief that the career of Krasnoyarsk will be short. And when we remember, also, the uncer-

tainty of the duration of the present produce of the mines, which is its proper support, the improvidence of the wealthy inhabitants, in squandering away millions of rubles upon a church in the aisles of which the wolf may howl and the bear promenade in security before a couple of generations have passed away, will be tolerably apparent.

I must mention here a further proof of the malicious character of some of the inhabitants of the town, by which I was a little disconcerted during my stay at Krasnoyarsk. Notwithstanding the hospitality and kindness that I had continually experienced at the hands of the better classes of the Siberians, I was never indeed without apprehension of some trick being played, by some one among the bad portion of the population, to arrest my further travels. A spy, I had been over and over again very politely termed; and although words are but breath, such as these often indicate premeditated acts. I knew, indeed, while I was at Tomsk, that some officious persons had reported to the chief of the police, that they had full proof of this important piece of news, that the foreigner had been seen in his room writing—notes of course—and which could be about nothing good. I was told, however, by my friends, that all this was not worth regarding; and that if my steps were arrested, it would be by a messenger called a *feld-jager*, directly from Russia Proper, in the same manner that had been done in the case of my countryman the blind traveller, Holman, after his arrival at Irkoutsk; and the reception I continually met with every where assured me that my friends were right. But during my stay in this place, while I was one evening sitting very tranquilly with my friends over tea and the *chiboock*, a guest who entered reported that he had just come from the house of my first acquaintances at Krasnoyarsk, where it was con-

fidently said that a *feld-jäger* had passed hastily through the town on his way to arrest an Englishman, whom he expected to find at Irkoutsk, to which he was travelling. This report at first seemed absurd, from the apparent impossibility of the messenger passing through the town in ignorance of any information that it was his duty to obtain; and he might certainly have learned here, that there was an Englishman in this town, and, also, that there was not one of our countrymen at Irkoutsk. Yet when the matter was discussed, it appeared probable enough; as this was quite certain, that the letters I had written to St. Petersburg all mentioned my immediate departure from wherever I was writing, for Irkoutsk; and in case of that town alone being mentioned in the *feld-jäger's* instructions, he would not stop at any other, even if he met the very man for whom he was in search, face to face in the street. Nevertheless, as I did not, either there or any where else, encounter any such messenger of ill-offices, the malicious report must be put to the account of the *debauchés* at the *conditorei* over their champagne.

After a fortnight passed among my good friends at Krasnoyarsk, I had every thing prepared for the prosecution of my journey towards the capital of Eastern Siberia. I had been much embarrassed about the manner in which it might be most advisable to travel. I had had quite enough of the method last tried, and I was determined to be at least independent. It was impossible, however, to procure an interpreter or servant of any sort. The sole means that I could adopt, was to travel in my own equipage, and trust to the little I knew of the tongue, and to the chance of finding the *chinovnik* at the government posts more accommodating than my experience, indeed, led me to expect. I now provided myself, therefore, with a *sani*; but before I had time to make my arrangements, a

a French gentleman, formerly an officer in the French army, but who had been many years living at Irkoutsk, with his wife a Russian lady, and keeping an institution for education, happened to arrive; and, as I had a seat for him, an arrangement to travel together suited us equally, and was easily concluded.

I took leave of my Krasnoyarsk friends with the same regrets that I had parted from those of a longer acquaintance in the town of my previous sojourn. Gospodin Vassilliefski and his amiable lady exacted a promise that I would stay with them again, and as long as possible, in case of my return, which was at this time uncertain; and every one that has been herein mentioned, expressed a hope of my making another stay among them.

In one particular case, the parting was not without a touch of that feeling which springs from the sense of the obligations that we owe to one another, which not all the snows of Siberia, nor the storms of this inhospitable region, can extinguish: it was, however, short. I had already taken leave of the exile above mentioned, whom I had frequently visited; but it had been in the midst of his family and some friends. While, however, I was spending my last tranquil half-hour with the excellent family with whom I had been staying, this gentleman entered. He had not been satisfied with our previous parting, and wished to say more than the opportunity had then admitted. Time, however, did not now allow of many words; yet I shall never forget those which dropped from him during the interview. And, as he let go my hand, which he had pressed to his bosom, and was in the act of closing the door by which we stood, his last words, which he spoke with effort, were, "Remember the Exile!"

## CHAP. XXXII.

### JOURNEY FROM KRASNOYARSK TOWARDS IRKOUTSK.

Danger of neglecting Precautions against Cold.—Fine clear Weather.—Excessive Cold.—The Villages.—Wolf-chase on Snow-shoes and on Horseback.—Fox-chase.—Superior Cunning of the Fox.—Siberian Method of taking the Animals.—The Villages.—Poverty of the Inhabitants.—Consequences of our Negligence in providing.—*Stchee* of Horse-flesh.—Inhospitable Treatment in a small Town.—Charity of three Women.—Recommence the Journey.

When I recounted to my friends, after my arrival at Krasnoyarsk, all the little accidents of the journey from Tomsk, I was thought fortunate in having encountered milder weather than the average at this season, and strongly advised to be in all respects better prepared upon the next occasion.

When long exposed to the higher degrees of cold in this rigorous climate, not only does the face run the risk of a scalding, but the feet become exposed to more serious injury, from our being apt to keep less watch over them, and from the insidious character of the cold. This real enemy, as he increases in strength, increases in the same proportion in treachery, and is much more dangerous to the extremities than to the parts of the body which, being sometimes necessarily exposed, we are always the more careful to watch over. No precautions, therefore, were on this occasion neglected by my new companion and myself, that our experience taught us were necessary, or that were recommended by any of the older travellers in Siberia; and all being prepared, we entered our *sani* late in the

evening, according to the custom of the country; and, after bidding our friends who were assembled at Gospodin Vassilliefski's, a warm adieu, we commenced our journey.

The night was clear and light, but the cold was more intense than I had before experienced it while travelling. We had, indeed, observed, that the thermometer stood at 30 degrees of frost as we entered the *sani*. After leaving the town, we found the snow more equally laid and the ways good; and we slept at intervals during this night, without experiencing any inconvenience. We changed twice before day-light, and arrived early in the morning at the village of Balaiskaya, where, upon alighting, we found the thermometer risen to 28 degrees.

On the second day, we passed several villages, similarly placed to those mentioned upon former journeys, but generally more wretched in appearance, and certainly inhabited by a poorer class of the population. The country presented the same aspect that we had observed to prevail in the immediate vicinity of Krasnoyarsk, and was hilly, and apparently productive only of the spruce-fir and the cedar, which were very scantily sown upon the sides of the hills. We took our mid-day meal to-day at Borodinskaya.

On the third day, we arrived at a miserable village called Verhnéingaschinskaya, where, although we found horses, we were not even able to obtain a *samovar*. The face of the country was now, however, improving at every step; and by the afternoon, we were passing a tolerably wooded tract, of which the trees for the most part were the cedar, the lime, and the silver birch. In the afternoon we dined at Poimskaya, and late in the evening we supped at Polowino Tcheremhofskaya.

We had during to-day a little adventure which afforded us an hour's amusement. As we were crossing a

valley, we observed upon the side of a hill, and upon the road before us, a lone wolf making his meal upon some dead carcass, and we determined to make an attempt to get his skin for our future use. We therefore, prepared our fire-arms, and drove very slowly on, that we might give as little alarm as possible. The wolf, however, appeared to be well accustomed to the ways of men; for, before we were within shot of him, he walked leisurely towards a wood that was near the road; but the wood happening to be here without firs, and the birches to be scantily sown, every thing invited us to commence a chase. We chanced, too, to have three pairs of snow-shoes, though these are rarely carried by travellers, as they are hardly ever used, save where they may be easily obtained. With the use of them, the wolf, when the snow is deep, may be sometimes even easily approached and killed. As soon as we had made all our preparations, we followed the retreating enemy in open order; but, after half an hour's staggering in the snow, which was wholly too light to give us the advantages we had hoped to obtain over the animal, we were obliged to fire out of reasonable distance, and for the present to return. At the suggestion of the *yemstchik*, however, we tried yet another means of pursuit. Our conductor thought that the snow was not so deep, but that the horses might get a firm footing off the road; so we untackled them, and each mounted one; and, we now plunged into the snow off the road, and commenced a new chase, pitching and heaving like a boat in a head sea, or like a fish on dry land. We nevertheless did better in this way than with our snow-shoes; and the wolf, which stood quietly watching us till we reached the spot where we had before turned, now finding he must be more in earnest in his retreat than before, or he would be taken, began to do his best to get away. Sometimes we gained upon him; but i ear

the trunks of trees, he found here and there, little harder morsels of snow that enabled him to recover his distance, which he contrived should be always out of gun shot. Thus, after about an hour's amusement, we were obliged to give up this chase, as we had done the last.

The next morning we had another chase on our snow-shoes after a fox that we found occupied in tearing another frozen carcass of a horse. We had no chance, however, of enriching our stock of furs on this occasion. The character of cunning or intelligence is certainly not attributed to this animal without sufficient reason. The fox walked away as we approached him, in the same leisurely manner that the wolf had done the day before; but he kept always a tree in his wake in respect to the party nearest to him, and he trod so gingerly upon the snow that it bore his lesser weight very well. Our *yemstchik* had killed many of both these animals after overtaking them in the manner we attempted; and he had found the fox always the most difficult to get at, from the superior art of that animal. His plan was, to frighten them and make them attempt to run, in doing which, they sink in the snow as they step; and, when this is not so deep as it was on the present occasion, if the snow-shoe fails, from the same cause that it failed with ourselves in our chase after the wolf, the horse overtakes them. He rarely used any thing but a stick to kill even the wolf, but avoided approaching too near the chafed animal, until he had obliged him to exhaust his strength by his struggles in the snow. We tried to frighten the fox by firing at him; but he did not hasten his pace a jot, and we were soon foiled and obliged to give up the chase.

The villages were here at distances of from thirty to thirty-five versts from one another, and so wretched and so badly supplied with provisions for both man

and horse, that travellers not provided with an independent stock of comestibles, have sometimes to support a rather inconvenient degree of hunger, and many horses of the caravans fall upon the road. When we left Krasnoyarsk, although we had taken every precaution against the great general enemy, the cold, we had not so fully considered the claims of the stomach to a provision against its particular wants. Our bread and meat were always frozen when we alighted to take our meals; and the necessity of trusting them out of our hands to get thawed, with the unpleasantness, moreover, of collecting the scraps to carry away from a house where we knew we should have been fed upon beef-steaks with a hearty welcome, if such food could have been obtained, had made us very incautious; so that our stock had diminished much faster than we had calculated upon; and when we stopped in the middle of the fourth day at the village of Oukofskaya, we had eaten nothing since the sun rose, and were glad to find a brave mess of *stchee*, of which we partook heartily. We found the taste of our accustomed dish, however, to-day peculiar; and after we re-commenced our journey, some doubts and conjectures arose in our minds concerning what we had been eating, which soon had a tolerably clear solution, by the *yemstchik* pointing out to us the marks of the axe upon the frozen carcass of a horse lying within a quarter of a verst of the site of our feast. There was nothing, however, to complain of, but the uncertainty concerning the course of the viand from life to the *stchee* kettle. We had the same dish several times offered us at the villages where we stopped; and we were only prevented by this uncertainty, from making on these occasions a hearty meal, although we had procured ourselves some good rye bread at one of the villages, and were above absolute want.

Before midnight, we arrived at the small town of

Nijhni Oudinske, where we received worse treatment than I had at any time before experienced since first touching the soil of Russia. The gold mania which has afflicted the larger towns of Siberia, and corrupted the manners of the inhabitants, has converted the smaller towns, where the example of an educated class is wanting, into very seats of depravity and ill-manners. When the traveller arrives in any one of these newly-formed centres of districts, which is just beginning to assume the dignity of a town, his very best policy is to get out of it as soon as he can; for he may be certain, unless it be a happy exception, which indeed is to be found, that he will meet nothing to recompense his stay. This my companion knew very well by experience, and myself by report. We drove, therefore, directly to the post station, in hopes of being able to procure horses to continue our journey as usual. As we had not yet had any difficulties at the stations at which we stopped, but, on the contrary, every facility, we did not expect any thing of the kind on this occasion. And as to the people of the town, we trusted we should not be under the necessity of requiring any thing at the hands of any of them. On our arrival, however, at the post-house, we were told, in reply to our application for horses, that there were none at present in the town, and that there were not likely to be any before the next day; and to our request, which was made at the suggestion of the *yemstchik*, who did not know where to lodge us, and the cold was intense, that we might remain the night in the apartments of the station, we received a positive denial. Our *yemstchik* now, therefore, drove us to a house at a very short distance from that at which we had stopped, where he had some hopes of procuring a lodging, but how well founded we shall see.

The answer returned to the *yemstchik's* demand after

mocking at the door of this house, was, "Who are your passengers?"

"Two gentlemen," was the reply.

"Are they *chinovnik*, or are they from the mines?" was then demanded.

The *yemstchik* now applied to us to know what answer he should give to this question, and was instructed to say that we were neither of these, but foreigners, detained for want of horses, and houseless, and would willingly pay for a lodging. The answer, however, to this was, "We have no accommodation for strangers; they must go elsewhere."

The *yemstchik* now drove us, not a little chagrined at this rebuff, to another house, into which he thought we had a chance of obtaining an entrance. But here the reply we obtained, in answer to our application, was the question: "Are the gentlemen decorated?" meaning, with some one or more of the insignia of rank, which it is common to count by some half-dozen together upon the coat of a good Russian, even though he be not of very exalted rank; and this being answered in the negative, we were again told that we must go elsewhere.

At another and another house, I know not how many, we tried by the same means to obtain admittance, and with the same success. At several of them, indeed, we received unmeasured abuse for waking up the inhabitants.

At length, while we were driving up one of the streets, we met a fellow in a *schouba*, the quality and form of which indicated rank above that of the peasant class at least; but in this, though it might have been a sign elsewhere that we should find within the furred skins at least a spark of humanity, we had not much trust here. Nevertheless, we accosted him very civilly with a request that he would lead us to some house

where we might pass the night. But in reply, we received from him such abuse as could come alone from the mouth of a drunkard; and, in effect, we found we had encountered and asked the aid of a drunken foreign exile, who was going home from some midnight revel. Nothing could have been more brutal than this man's conduct. However, we knew not the circumstances of his life, and how far his brutality, had we known his history, might have been accounted for or excused.

Soon after this, we met another foot-passenger, whose skins indicated also some rank or other. Him we likewise accosted, but with some increased mistrust after the last rebuff, informing him of our wants and our treatment at the station. He made at least more particular inquiries who we were, and condescended to hold quite a parley with us, during which our *yemstchik* informed us that we were talking with no less a personage than the *gorodnichii*, or chief of police of the town. At this our spirits rose at once from the zero to which cold and disappointment had reduced them, to the full summer heat of hope; and as we knew that it was even this man's duty, if, as we doubted not, he was really the personage he was taken for, to provide us with quarters, already we felt in imagination the reviving influence of the brave Russian *amossor*. To our surprise, however, the *gorodnichii* (if such he really were, but which we had not afterwards the opportunity of ascertaining) had no sooner heard our story, than he gave the *yemstchik* two or three hearty curses, that wanted no knowledge of the tongue they were uttered in to comprehend, and went his way, leaving us with even less hope than ever.

We again tried several of the houses, without knowing by whom they were inhabited, but with the same success as before. And now the good *yemstchik* and my fellow-traveller reasoned together about our position,

which was becoming worse and worse every moment. My fellow-traveller proposed that we should drive on to the next village. But this the *yemstchik* stoutly opposed by unanswerable reasons. The distance, he stated, exceeded twenty versts, and his horses, which were now as white with the frost as the snow upon which they trod, were already fatigued; and thus it would take above two hours to accomplish the journey; and this was a longer time than we could remain exposed to the cold, which he declared to be at 40 degrees, without a certainty of serious injury.

In our present position, there appeared to be but a single resource, which was to break open one of the houses and enter by force. But upon a suggestion being imparted to the *yemstchik* to this effect, by my companion, our more prudent conductor said it might be very well if we could find any house that we knew to be only inhabited by women, whom we might first conquer by force and afterwards conciliate by good words; but that, if we attempted to storm any house where there were men, without taking into account the consequences which might follow the breach of the law, we should at once come to a regular battle with our deadly weapons under great disadvantages on our side; and if we got in whole, we should assuredly lie down to rest and rise the next day homicides, and be flogged and stamped, and sent to the mines at Nertchinsk. In fact, he thought, that, notwithstanding our necessitous condition, we were not serious when we proposed such an alternative; and he added, that if we were serious, he would rather lie down in the snow and perish than join in the attempt.

Nevertheless, the suggestion seemed as if it might prove a happy one; for when the *yemstchik* spoke of finding houses only defended by women, it occurred to us, that if a house, inhabited only by women, were

indeed to be found, its fair tenants might not have lost all their humanity, nor perhaps require even threats to induce them to unbar the door; and our conductor was directed to try and find in reality some domicile inhabited by a party of the fair sex alone.

"It is no use knocking at any more houses," said the *yemstchik*, as soon as the proposition had been communicated to him. And he now somewhat reproachingly told us, that the condition to which we were reduced was owing entirely to ourselves, and that all arose from our want of sufficient acquaintance with the Russian tongue to pass for Russians. "I have told the inhabitants of a dozen houses," said he, speaking now in a tone of voice that indicated a lively sense of the danger to which we were now exposed, "that you are both decorated, and of high rank; but I have not been believed, or it would have been otherwise. Could you but have shown a uniform, or have demanded entrance in any house in good Russian, we should not have been refused." Nevertheless, "Knock again," we said, as we both descended from the *sani*, to afford any aid that might be required; and if it be useless to ask admittance, tell every one of whom you have gained the ear, that you are in search of some maiden aunts of your own, that live alone, and whom you have not seen for many years; and beg them to point out any house likely to be that for which you are in search.

This manner of carrying out the suggestion now took such firm hold of the fancy of the *yemstchik*, that he ran and knocked at once at the house that was nearest to us, where he was presently answered, as roughly as usual, from within. The question which we had suggested, was now, however, immediately put. But whether the inhabitants suspected our object or not, a parley now took place, which lasted long enough to determine the fate of a fortress. Never-

theless, it ended in the *yemstchik* being actually directed to a house where there were said to be no inhabitants but women.

This was at least another glimmer of hope for us; and we drove off in search of the feminine-garrisoned castle. It was at a short distance, and easily found. And as our conductor now jumped from his seat, we instructed him to knock very gently that he might not cause any alarm. This mandate he obeyed; but he was not answered until he had given a second and a third knock, somewhat louder. Now, however, a voice, most assuredly that of one of the fair sex, was heard, and another parley commenced between the parties within and without. It was, however, upon this occasion, of short duration; and the *yemstchik* now turned to inform us, that as soon as he had made known our necessitous condition, he was desired to tell us that we were quite welcome to take up our quarters here for the night, and that it was only begged of us that on entering we would be quick, and allow as little cold as possible to enter the house, as the *amossor* had not been heated since the previous morning.

I confess I never saw any one in such an ecstasy as that into which our delighted *yemstchik* seemed now to pass. As we alighted, he threw himself upon the snow, and kissed our feet, as if some special good, of which we were the authors, had befallen himself alone. Then rising, he ran and hugged his horses by the neck, and now blessed the Virgin and all the saints as warmly as it would have been possible for him to do, had they sent him a passport to pass the gate of Paradise unquestioned.

Nor shall I easily forget my impression of our first moments after entering the charitable asylum. Two of three good women that had risen from their beds, were already as busy as the humming insect, to which we

usually compare the industrious, one of them in swee ing one side of the room to lay down our beds, and tl other in preparing the *samovar* for our tea; and tl third now came and aided us in disencumbering ourselv of our *schoubas*.

As soon as the *samovar* was placed upon the table we sat down upon benches, and after obliging ou benefactors to join us, drank away of the sober be verage together, while a *stchee* was warming on th *amossor*. And now, when we were warm and comfortable, and glorying in our good fortune, my companion began to give our true friends an account of the treatment we had received since we entered the town. In the meantime, the *yemstchik*, who had conducted his horses to the station yard, reappeared, and sitting down upon one of our beds, which were laid out upon the ground, while he drank of the tea also, gave them an account of the invention that we had been driven to, by which he had happily, however, as my friend translated the expression which he used, "found his angelic aunts."

The account of the *yemstchik* caused such a flow of mirth and good humour among the Russian women, as could only have been excited by a degree of natural wit upon the side of the narrator, which we had to regret we could not appreciate.

After our tea, we supped heartily upon beef *stchee*, and now prepared for bed. But upon our good friends offering to wash our feet, we were reminded that it was time to examine very closely whether the demon frost had crept in any form beneath our furs, and left any traces of his visit; and we now found, indeed, in both our cases, what we were quite unconscious of until this moment, that the insidious enemy had been there, although the time had not allowed of his effecting much mischief. My companion had had his feet near the

verge of serious injury; for they were now in a state called by the Siberians *zazobina*, which is a condition of torpor that precedes the positive possession of the frost, and often actually endures for a long time. A part of one of mine, too, was in the same state, as well as a large portion of the flesh on the front of one of my legs above the knee: and of neither of these little inconveniences did I get perfectly rid, until I had been afterwards for some time in a tropical climate. My companion had, indeed, felt a little cold in the part he now found affected, but which he thought too slight to regard, though myself had absolutely felt nothing. Thus it may easily be conceived what the consequences of an exposure for another hour would have been. What we experienced we thought however, might serve as a fortunate accident, in warning us against allowing ourselves to be caught again in a small new town at night, if at any time we could avoid it; and we went satisfied to bed, and slept soundly for the remaining hours of darkness.

Very shortly after sun-rise, our *yemstchik* went off in search of horses. He soon found them; and we rose, took tea again with our benefactors, and some good *stchee*; and after commending the "angelic aunts" to the protection of the Virgin and all the saints, and bowing to their houschold saint in the holy corner, which it would not have been decent to neglect, we once more entered our *sani* and departed.

## CHAP. XXXIII.

### JOURNEY FROM KRASNOYARSK TO IRKOUTSK—*continued.*

Weather clear and cold.—Further Consequences of the Rascality of the *Chinovnik.*—Dangerous Position.—The Villages.—Passed a Manufactory of Salt.—Arrival at Irkoutsk.—Observations concerning the Cold.—Great Caution necessary.—Question concerning special Providence.—Calm at low Temperature.—Tea better than Brandy.—Our Cognac a good Thermometer.—Inconvenience of the Ice about the Face.—Effects of the Cold on the Head.—Vapoury Atmosphere.—Suppositions concerning the Aurora Borealis.

THE sky was without a cloud as we recommenced our journey on the morning after our adventure and dangerous exposure to cold. There was no perceptible difference in the temperature of the atmosphere since the evening; and we renewed our usual rapid pace, with the sun shining in our faces, and comfortably reclining, well enveloped as usual in our abundance of furs. But before we had proceeded many versts, and while we were yet full of self-congratulations for the fortunate termination of our troubles of the past night, we found ourselves exposed to the consequences of another piece of rascality on the part of the *chinovnik*, who conducted the business at the post station in the town, by which we now had as narrow an escape from broken necks, as we had had during the night from the worst effects of the cold.

One of the horses that had been given us, had scarcely before been in harness, and he became in a short time unmanageable, and communicated his spirit to the other two; and they now dashed down an

inclined way, which we commenced descending soon after leaving the town, at such a mad speed that, although this would have been of little moment upon even ground, now, owing to the character of the road, soon brought us into peril. We had, as we lay tranquilly reclining, for some time observed the *yemstchik* trying to arrest the speed of his horses by the rein and soothing words; but we did not so much as dream of danger, as we glided rapidly down the inclined way. It did occur to me, indeed, as the *yemstchik* continued his efforts to arrest the course of his horses in vain, that it would be as well to see what was before us, but finding some difficulty when I attempted to rise, by reason of the manner in which we were packed, and being unwilling to change my position, I remained still, enjoying the exciting effects of our rapid flight through the air. My companion, too, remained equally indifferent or pleased; and the *yemstchik* spoke only to the horses, though his language was intelligible enough to both of us. But presently the *sani* struck violently against a rocky bank, and knocked off one of our *otvodi*, or fenders; and as we were thus threatened with an overthrow, we both rose from our reclining position, when we perceived we were just approaching a steeper declivity, and no doubt a deep ravine, and that it was time to aid the *yemstchik* to stop, if it were possible, the course of his fiery steeds. The ungovernable young animal that had inspired his fellows in the race, was upon the side of my companion, who, as soon as he plainly saw the character of the ground before us, started forward, and seizing the single rein on his side with both hands, fell back in the *sani*, and by this means threw the beast directly on his side upon the ground, and the vehicle was thus suddenly stopped, and we alighted.

It was not, however, until we were out of the *sani*, that we were fully aware of the danger from which the

strength and quickness of my companion had rescued us. But upon a view of the ground before us, we had now at least as much reason as before, to congratulate ourselves on our escape; for we were within a short distance of a portion of the road that, on account of its position, the disabled *sani* could not have passed without upsetting, when, as it was now evident from the nature of the ground, we should have rolled altogether headlong down the declivity into a deep ravine, without a chance of either man or horse escaping destruction.

We changed horses at the village of Kirguitouiskaya, and at several other villages during the day; but alighted once only towards evening at the village of Cheragoulskaya, where we supped upon tea and our own black bread after thawing it, there being nothing to be obtained of the peasants but some bread, which was more like pieces of decayed stumps of trees, than any thing I ever before saw used for human food.

The day after that upon which we left Nijhni Oudinske, we breakfasted at Kimilteïskaya. The face of the country continued to present the same invariable undulations, with a scanty covering generally of dark stunted firs, at intervals relieved by a greater or less mixture of the lighter-coloured pine, and a few silver birches. In the evening of this day, we took our *samovar* at Tcheremhoffskaya.

The next day, we passed a manufactory of salt, at the distance of ten versts from Biliktouiskaya, where we stopped in the middle of the day, and had once more some tolerable *stchee;* and the same evening, being the 18th of January, and which completed the eighth day from our departure from Krasnoyarsk, we crossed the River Angara, and arrived at Irkoutsk, the capital of Eastern Siberia, making a distance in that time of 989 versts.

As the cold that was experienced during the latter

part of this journey, as may be seen by the register of the weather at Irkoutsk, which will be found in a subsequent chapter, was the greatest that was felt in this part of Siberia during the winter of 1847-48, this may be a fit place for a few remarks upon its effect, in respect to the danger and inconveniences with which it is attended in travelling.

It will be seen by the register, that the cold was at 23 degrees on the morning of the day of our arrival at Irkoutsk, and at 38 degrees on the morning which preceded the night of our adventure at Nijhni Oudinske, and at 35 degrees the following morning: and the variations of the temperature were probably the same on the road as in the town in which the register was kept.

Nothing, it has been said, but urgent necessity induces travellers in Siberia to commence a journey when the cold is at an extreme like that which we experienced; but once on their way, nothing but a violent snow storm and drift arrests their progress. We were, however, though not unexpectedly and unprepared, subjected to this extreme, as well as to the necessity of continuing the journey. We had, indeed, been quite sensible of the superior degree of cold we experienced to that which we had at any time before encountered; but nothing had been neglected to secure our safe passage from village to village; and the only risk that we ran, arose out of the circumstances above described. At all times we wore furred boots, and two distinct *schoubas*, the under one being of sable and the upper of the skin of the bear. And besides these, a covering of sheepskin was thrown over us as we reclined, and our feet were placed again in bags, which we obtained of the peasants on the road, made of the furred skin of the deer, which is by many said to be, but certainly without reason, the warmest of all the furs of which we rob the beasts to cover us. The bear certainly furnishes us

with the best guarantee against the cold. The wolf has the next claim to our gratitude; and probably the deer, and the marten (which furnishes us with the sable), may dispute the claim, upon the whole, for superior services done to their destroyers.

Many men attribute at least all unexpected events to some special providence, whether to warn us against particular dangers, or to reward or punish us, or to determine our actions—

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them as we will;"

and there are others who think we are yet too low in the scale of creation, whatever we may be hereafter, to be worthy of such particular regard At any rate it is certain that some little test we had of the effects of the frost a day or two before we arrived at Nijhni Oudinske, served to excite us to fresh efforts to fence out the great enemy: and we felt assured that the accidental addition that we made to our furs saved us from the loss of our feet.

It is well known, that after the degree of cold bordering upon that at which the mercury freezes or ceases to indicate the temperature, it is invariably calm. Not a breath of air fanned our faces, from the time we quitted Nijhni Oudinske, till we reached our destination.

The effects of the cold, as far as my experience reaches, I feel confident in stating, will be greater upon any part of the body exposed to wind when the thermometer indicates 20 degrees of frost, than when the air is still and the thermometer indicates 35 degrees, or even more. It is of course generally considered dangerous to sleep in the open air during the extreme cold, and the same, indeed, in any apartment not warmed with artificial heat; and we, therefore,

always, at night especially, partook unsparingly of the wakeful beverage from the *samovar* to prevent as much as possible any tendency to falling unconsciously into too drowsy a mood: and this was the more necessary, since we had not the resource of conversation, which was almost impossible, as our ears were enclosed, like the rest of our bodies, within thick coverings of fur. We had provided ourselves with a single bottle of cognac upon leaving Krasnoyarsk, which in some measure replaced our thermometer, after the mercury had frozen. That we might not lose this advantage, and perhaps the services of our *yemstchik*, should he not be superior to temptation, and at a time that they were indispensable, I kept it in the pocket of my upper *schouba*. Notwithstanding this, however, it indicated, with seeming regularity, the changes of the temperature from hour to hour, or stage to stage. It was not indeed at any time frozen into a solid lump; but even where it was placed, with a sheepskin above my upper *schouba*, it became a crystallised mass, and always came from the bottle when we examined its state more or less coagulated. Upon the morning, indeed, which succeeded the night of our adventure at Nijhni Oudinske, we could not get any of it from the bottle before it had been subjected to artificial heat. Thus we considered the relative cold so well indicated by the state of our cognac, though mingled with what proportion of water we knew not, that we watched it, and examined it every time the opportunity arose with scarcely less faith and interest than the mariner watches the rising and falling of the barometer during tempestuous weather at sea.

Among the many inconveniences to which the traveller in this cold region is subjected, and which happens, more or less at any degree of temperature below about 10 or 12 degrees, is the freezing, as it is called, of the breath upon every thing around that portion of

the face which is exposed. When, however, the cold is not much greater than that above mentioned, this is of little consequence; but when the temperature is very low, it becomes an intolerable inconvenience. In the first instance, the face being less covered, the ice is more out of the way; but when it is necessary that only the smallest portion possible of the flesh should be exposed, the ice gathers in such masses round the eyes and the mouth, the two features that support with the least patience any restraint upon the use of their faculties, that respiration and sight, save through a curtain of ice, are obstructed; and, if we sleep, which it is perfectly safe to do, exposed to the cold that may have this effect, we awake probably quite masked in ice.

At first, this inconvenience troubled me the more, that I found the ice actually incasing a portion of the flesh of my face, like a veneering slab of some transparent substance upon an opaque base. I thought that there was danger of the flesh freezing with the ice that covered it, but there was not the slightest. The flesh and the ice are not in reality in contact; and so far from the part covered being actually affected by the frost, the ice being probably at a temperature abundantly higher than the air, becomes rather a protection than a source of danger to the portion of the face which it covers.

There is no remedy for all the inconveniences occasioned by the ice, except in knocking off the lumps and icicles as they form, if we are awake, so as to obtain a free passage for the breath. And it is especially necessary to do this before entering a warm room; otherwise the fur will get soaking wet when we have not time to dry it before we are again exposed; and upon re-entering our *sani*, so much of it will be a hard mass as to prevent our covering ourselves up again with the same comfort as before.

I will mention here an effect of the frost which I experienced when exposed, but which is not usual with the inhabitants. My head, when the cold was at the greatest, was so hot with the mere ordinary fur cap, that often I was obliged to leave the whole above the ears bare for full half an hour at a time; yet from this I experienced no inconvenience. I was not able to discover the proper cause of this effect, and still less why it should be experienced, as it happened to me, at one time and not at another.

The atmosphere had during the whole of the day which preceded the last night of our journey, seemed to be filled with a thin and bright vapour, similar to that which is seen rising from the chimneys in the towns at this season of the year when the fires are alight, and it is calm, and the cold severe. This appearance in the air, covering both hill and vale, is common; but does not take place until the frost, as it is usually considered, even reaches to about 40 degrees. The inhabitants call it a congelation of the air itself.

The sky while we observed this phenomenon, was clear above our heads, and the atmosphere, which, as it has been above mentioned, is invariably the case during extreme cold, was perfectly still; and as the sun set, the silvery vapours became streaked with golden tints, which, before the light was extinct, presented from west to east one gaudy illumination. This phenomenon was particularly interesting to myself; as it so much resembled an appearance I once saw in a northern latitude upon the western continent, covering the whole heavens (and which, there could be no doubt, was the aurora borealis), as strongly to impress me with an opinion, that it was the same with that light which is yet so far from being satisfactorily accounted for by the natural philosophers. Is it not possible, that during the extreme cold in the highest latitudes, that this same dense at-

mosphere may be formed, even at a height sufficient to catch the rays of the sun while below the horizon, and thus become visible in all high latitudes, though subjected to different influences, and presenting a proportionately varied appearance?

While we contemplated this magnificent show, as we glided along our smooth way, it seemed as if it would have been a small thing to sacrifice all the other enjoyments of our travels and still retain the pains, to have a Herschel, a Strüve, or a Rosse with us, even had the philosopher been as incommunicable to his fellow travellers as the monks of La Trappe are to one another.

## CHAP. XXXIV.

### IRKOUTSK.

Position of the Town.—Importance.—Population.—Buildings.—Schools.—Gymnasium.—Privileges of the Boys.—Sons of Peasants.—Sons of Exiles.—First Evening at Irkoutsk.—The Traveller receives Letters from the English Ambassador.—Letters from Count Nesselrode to the Governor.—Relief from Suspense and Anxiety.—Interview with the Governor.—Installed in good Quarters.—Dinner at the Government-house.—A Cloten of the Siberian Court.—Siberian's Wit.—Mirth.—Visit to the Chief of the Political Exiles.

IRKOUTSK, the capital of Eastern Siberia, is seated at the immediate point of the confluence of the Angara, the most considerable of all the rivers that fall into the Yenessei, and the broad and rapid torrent of the Irkout. It contains a population of 18,000 souls, composed of the same social grades as the population of the town of Tomsk. It is the seat of the government of Eastern Siberia, and the place of residence and head quarters of the governor-general over all the departments which are comprised in the great eastern division of the country. It possesses a handsome cathedral, nine churches, a government-house, and all the ordinary public buildings of a Russian governmental town, and a *gostinnoi dvor*.

There are seven public establishments for education in Irkoutsk, five of which are for the instruction of boys, and two for girls. And there is also an independent seminary for the daughters of parents who can afford and prefer to give their children a private education.

The schools for the boys are of three distinct kinds, with different objects. One of them is designed for the

sons of exiles of every kind, who are, without distinction, obliged by the law to be raised for soldiers. The boys are here educated, but not maintained, at the public charge. Another receives the sons of the *chinovnik*, who are educated, fed, and clothed, at the expense of the crown, in the service of which they are afterwards employed.

Two higher schools have a common object, one of them being but an elementary school of three classes, in which the children are prepared for the gymnasium, or higher school, which has seven classes. In this establishment there are usually about 150 boys, forty of whom are by special privilege under regulations bearing reference to the positions of their parents, maintained as well as educated at the public expense. The scholars are for the most part sons of officers, merchants, and proprietors of mines or their agents. They receive a liberal education, and usually afterwards follow the profession or business of their fathers. Besides the head master, there are fourteen professors; and the branches of knowledge which are taught are the Russian, Latin, German, French, and English languages, geography, mathematics, rhetoric, logic, physics, and drawing. All the boys, even though they should be the sons of peasants (of which there are many among the rest), if they pass a prescribed examination, are equally eligible to advancement, and may enter one of the universities of Russia under certain regulations. Those, for instance, who attain this privilege, but who have been educated at the public charge, are only eligible for Kazan, and are liable to serve the crown for eight years; while those who are educated at the expense of their parents may enter any one of the universities in Russia, according to their objects, the constitution and design of the universities being different; and they are liable for only six years' service.

It must here be remarked, however, that although, strictly speaking, the sons of the political exiles have no higher privilege than those of the criminal, who are ineligible to the higher class schools, the iron letter of the law has yielded to the force of natural claims, and the greater part of these enter the elementary school, which gives equal right to all to pass to the gymnasium, where they wear uniform and receive the fourteenth or lowest grade of nobility, and become, finally, eligible to enter one of the universities of Russia.

The remaining school for boys is exclusively for the sons of the clergy who are designed for the priesthood. At this period it contained no less than 150 scholars. All must have attained the age of fifteen before commencing their theological studies. They remain in the institution for six years; at the expiration of which they are subjected to an examination, and advanced in proportion to the degree of proficiency which they have attained. A few of those who appear to have made the greatest advances in their studies, at the expiration of the prescribed period are transferred to one of the four higher colleges at St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kieff, or Kazan. After this, such as aspire to the rank of bishops, become monks. Those who are next in reputation for their progress at the termination of their studies at the college, become eligible for the ministry; and upon their taking to themselves wives, they are ordained deacons, priests, and ministers. But those scholars who do not acquire such a reputation as is thought sufficient to entitle them to any of these privileges, are employed in the meaner ranks of the clerical order, or as mere assistants in the performance of the ordinary offices of the church.

One of the two public institutions for girls is maintained at the expense of the crown, and admits fifty children free. The other was founded by a million-

naire of Irkoutsk, and admits thirty or forty free. The only private establishment, was in 1848 conducted by the accomplished wife of my last fellow-traveller, as before mentioned.

On our arrival at Irkoutsk, we had driven immediately to the residence of my fellow-traveller, from whose wife I received a most friendly reception, and an invitation to remain till I should be provided with apartments. Madame Richie was the daughter of a French officer who was made prisoner during the memorable campaign of 1812, and who ultimately settled and married in the south of Russia.

This kind lady had been watching for the arrival of her husband with great anxiety, on account of the degree of cold which had for several days prevailed; and her first care was now about our feet, which she insisted we should immediately examine. We were obedient to this mandate; but after the warning we had received, we had been too cautious to leave any part of our bodies exposed to the further attempts of the lurking enemy; and we found ourselves certainly no worse than when we took leave of our kind benefactors at Nijhni Oudinske.

After a good supper, we gave the lady an account of our chief adventures during the journey, and received in return the little news of the town. After which we retired to repose, full of the delightful impression of our security from the enemy whose presence had made us too wakeful to sleep, but at short intervals, during nearly the whole of our journey.

On the morning after our arrival, M. Richie accompanied me to the post office, where I had the satisfaction of finding a letter from Lord Bloomfield, then her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at the Court of Russia, in reply to an application, which it has been mentioned I addressed to his lordship, before

passing the Ural Mountains. His lordship's letter enclosed a despatch from the Count Nesselrode, his Imperial Majesty's first Minister, to Gospodin Piattitzski, civil governor of Eastern Siberia, and now, in the absence of the governor-general, administering the government in all its departments, and which his lordship informed me, contained every thing for which I had made application, or that might be necessary for my security and protection within the limits of the empire.

Nothing could surpass the pleasure I felt upon this occasion. I was at once relieved from the state of uncertainty and anxiety in which I had been for several months, and amid which it was impossible to form any plan, or to know what a day might bring forth. It was like arriving in port, and bidding adieu to the confined cabin of a leaky ship, when the world seems all before us, and our will once more our sovereign guide.

M. Richie at once volunteered his services to accompany me on a visit to the governor, to whose residence we therefore lost no time in directing our steps. We found his excellency in his office alone. He received us very politely; and after perusing the despatch which I brought with me, he informed me that he was commanded to afford me every facility and protection, and every aid, towards the prosecution of my future travels in any part of his Imperial Majesty's dominions.

The governor now required of us, as is usual in the country, a full account of the accidents of our journey. Lest we might unconsciously injure some innocent parties, we confined ourselves to an account of the effects of the cold, and to our less remarkable adventures. But I could not help letting his excellency know, that it was not the first time I had seen him, and that the previous occasion had been accompanied with somewhat perhaps

wanton enjoyment. And, in explanation of this, I re-counted the little adventure, somewhat modified for the security of the parties, in which the peasants had circum-vented authority for the benefit of the foreigners, of whom I was one, during our long journey in Western Siberia, on which occasion, as already related, my former fellow-passengers and myself had triumphantly passed him by, while his equipage was sticking fast in the mud. The governor was at first shocked at the conduct of his domestics; but as we had been the triumphant party, the anecdote served only to afford amusement, and for a good hearty laugh, as well on the present as on several future occasions.

The next morning I received a communication from his excellency, to say that the police, whom he had sent at our request in search of a dwelling for me, had found a house of the description I required; and as a friend I had already made, brought me a young Russo-Siberian, who had been trained in the family of one of the higher class of political exiles, and was accus-tomed to domestic service, I immediately engaged him, and lost no time in taking possession of my new home.

My dwelling proved a neat little painted house in the principal street, and comfortable and warm; and although I had no interpreter, I trusted that, with the little I had by this time picked up of the tongue of the country, allowing for the natural intelligence of the people, that I should get on fairly enough.

The day after I was installed in my new abode, I received an invitation to dine at the government-house, where I met a very polite and friendly reception.

A very agreeable mixed party sat down to a repast of the usual plentiful variety of solids and delicacies of the Russian table. Among the company, there were officers lately arrived from the distant outposts of the government, several of the *chinovnik* of the higher

grades belonging to the town, and one or two gentlemen from among the mining class of the population, and one lady, who was the superintendent of the public institution for the education of young ladies. The principal conversation of the table was carried on in the Russian tongue; but as several of the party spoke French, among whom, one who sat near me volunteered his services as interpreter, it was not quite lost to me.

Among the company, there was a single guest of a class quite apart from any I had before met with, and such as might be a rarity in society in any country in the present age, and ought not therefore to be passed by unnoticed.

After the conquests made by civilised nations, as we Europeans deem ourselves exclusively, and the subjection of the barbarians that have lived, some under one form of government, and some under another, the appropriation of their territory, the destruction of their gods and temples, which had hitherto formed the nucleus of all that retained them in a state of society, and the almost total disappearance of the vanquished, some monument, in a less or greater number of the departed race, is nevertheless usually found, even in the most populous towns of the conquerors, though it be but in the form and figure of a single man, who remains hardly possessed of enough of the essential element of our common nature, to be held responsible for his actions or words. To this remnant of the race departed, the motives and the interests of life have disappeared, and left a void in the brain as abhorrent to nature, as a vacuum in the material world. And such seems to be our inclination to exalt ourselves by the comparison of relative endowments, that men have often acted as if the extinction of every relic of a race which they have reduced almost to a level with the brute tribes, would deprive them of the full enjoyment of

the fruits of their victory. Now, whether this too plain disposition of our nature, were or were not the origin of, and some remains of the conquered races, the sources from which were drawn, the half wits and cracked wits which have sat at court feasts, as well in our own land as in others, even from Cymbeline down to our fourth George, only modified by changes of manners during the intervening ages, I confess I was taken by surprise, at this semblance of the court of a great prince at the extremity of his dominions, to find extant the good old resource for amusing the guests and inmates of the palace, in the person of a sort of cloten of the Siberian Court.

The dinner upon this occasion seemed, in spite of this advantage, and of the mixed character of the guests present, to commence with rather an air of official restraint; but it soon turned to one of the merriest at which I was a guest while in the country. The merriment, however, and the sallies of wit which excited it, were confined chiefly to the centre portion of the table. Our amiable hostess appeared sufficiently occupied with her single guest of her own sex and the strangers, for I was not the only one among the company that might be so termed; and our host, on his side, evidently supported, like another Cymbeline, all the fooleries led by the droll of his primitive court, rather than bent the dignity of his position to join in the mirth of the rest upon the babble of this privileged personage. But though the attempt to reproduce what passed, in the manner in which it reached my ears, would exhibit but a pointless and imperfect discourse, yet I may mention a single sally of the Siberian cloten's humour, if it were such, in which I had at least the satisfaction to find myself the cause that wit or foolery was in other men.

"Governor," said our cloten, who of course knew

that I did not understand the tongue in which he spoke, nor probably that I had an interpreter near me, "I am persuaded, that we have one of those English tourists among us, that travel the world over and report all they see and hear. We must show ourselves in the best possible light, or we shall be thought in Europe no better than Tatars or Kirgeeze. But I will give him a proof that there is civilisation here, as well as in Europe. I will ask him to take wine with me after the fashion of his country. It will go down to posterity, that I drank wine with the tourist, after the most civilised mode, at the table of the emperor's representative in Siberia."

A courtier, seemingly not unacquainted with the art or the policy of flattering a favourite, remarked, addressing himself to our cloten, "Your name will go down to posterity for braver actions than this." Then a significant laugh announced to all who had any brains at all, in what different senses the speech might be understood.

The honour of the challenge to take wine was duly accepted. And if a copy of this report of it, with the rest of the volume, get behind some public or private shelf, and escape the annual sweeping off of ephemeral octavos for some half-dozen years after its date, myself, at least, will be quite satisfied; and I think the Siberian motley, if he should hear of this, ought to be so likewise.

After many gibes and jokes, probably of about the same value as that above reported, we rose; and, the usual compliments paid to the patron saint and the host and hostess, we withdrew to the saloon, where we had coffee and a few further sallies of Siberian wit, and some conversation, for a short half-hour, after which we retired.

As I felt at this time quite secure from the consequences of any suspicion of my objects in Siberia,

arising from a misrepresentation of any thing that it was convenient or agreeable for me to do, I gladly accepted an offer made by my late fellow-traveller the next day, to call with him upon some of the more remarkable of the political exiles, with all of whom he was well acquainted. For the present, however, I shall only observe, that those whom we visited I found living in a degree of ease and comfort, and even of contentment, that I was not prepared to witness. More especial opportunities will occur for some additional remarks to those already made, upon the difference between what in Europe is commonly supposed to be the condition of the exiles in general, and what really has been their condition during the whole of the period of their residence in Siberia.

## CHAP. XXXV.

### IRKOUTSK—*continued.*

Entertainment at a Merchant's.—Respect paid to Foreigners.—Remarkable Fish.—A learned Pope.—Colonel of the Mining Corps.—A Siberian young Lady's Ideas of Europe.—Impressions of France and England.—Attachment to her Place of Birth.—Supposed Rivalry of France and England.—Russian Customs.—Superstitions.—Persecution of Priests.—Superstitions at Table.—Manner of drinking Tea.—Droll Habit of the Ladies.—Milk after Dinner.—Bad Habits in Conversation.——Difficulty to change habitual Usages.—The Calendar.—Eastern Customs.—Eastern Embraces.—Meeting and taking leave of Ladies.—Suggestions for Improvement.—Siberian Jocosity.—Effects of a Jest.

A FEW days after our arrival at Irkoutsk, I supped by invitation at the house of the chief merchant of the eastern capital, but whose name has been unfortunately omitted in my memorandums, where I met the leading families of the town. We had the usual sumptuous supper of the country, served in the style of the millionnaires among the mining proprietors, with no lack of champagne and other French wines.

This merchant was a thorough Russian in sentiment, and open and hospitable. He was dressed like a St. Petersburg or other European gentleman, and was, by education and the effects of intercourse with the world, of a character far removed above the sordid class of his countrymen in the beard and caftan, in whose hands so fair a portion of the commerce of the land still remains.

Upon this, my first meeting with the principal private

families of Irkoutsk, I was welcomed by a number of those little attentions, commencing by a toast in champagne, which are so gratifying to a stranger wherever he may sojourn, and which become doubly so, when well known to be spontaneous and wholly disinterested. Although, in the present age, in spite of political revolutions, some progress has been made towards uniting all mankind in one great family, and the same good work, it may be hoped, will continue; yet sufficient distinction must ever remain between men of different races and nations, to admit of our being new to one another individually in society: and though the traveller may be solely indebted for all the attentions he receives, to the opinion entertained of his country, while this reflects more honour on those who confer them, it will generally more gratify those who receive them, than if they respected the individual alone.

The details of this entertainment were similar to those that have been mentioned upon other occasions; but there was at least one novelty at the supper. A fish called *comba*, which abounds in the Angara, and is much esteemed by the Siberians, was placed upon the table, and was a perfect show. Its length was between five and six feet, and its girth nearly three feet. Its form resembled that of the sturgeon; nor was it unlike that fish in flavour, though it is found only in fresh water. I confess I never before saw so enormous an animal served or cooked whole, save once an ox roasted at a "mop" in Warwickshire. There was also a *nelmar*, the most esteemed by the Siberians of all the fishes in which their rivers abound, the sterlet alone excepted. Yet it is a dry fish, and not highly flavoured. But it serves well to furnish a favourite dish of the country, which is fish soup.

These and other fishes are caught here with equal facility at all seasons with hooks and lines. In summer,

the fishermen launch out in canoes, and throw out their lines while at anchor, or while paddling against the stream. But at this season they cut holes in the ice; and make the same use of the hook and line.

Among the guests at the merchant's upon this occasion, I had the gratification of meeting a pope, who had lately arrived from Kamtschatka, where he had passed thirteen years. As he spoke a little English, which he had learned from the sailors of English and American whalers that visit the ports of that country, we were able to carry on something like a direct conversation; and I received from him much interesting information, of which I was subsequently able to make practical use.

This pope was considered the most learned of the Russian priests that had been in Siberia; and he was free from that mental inertness which is not uncommon among the clergy of the several Oriental Churches, and is the distinguishing character of a section at least of the Romish among the Western. He had brought with him proofs of his industry during the years he had spent among the semi-savages of the country in a history and description of the great peninsula and of the various races by which it is inhabited, which he intended to forward to St. Petersburg for publication. But he had brought, also, no less forcible proofs of the superiority of the canon law of the Eastern Churches over that of the Church which most resembles them among the Western, in a happy wife and ten children, and a reputation for the domestic virtues, which are surely the most necessary of all the Christian attributes for a priest to possess —

> "Whatever hypocrites austerely talk
> Of purity, and peace, and innocence,
> Defaming as impure what God declares
> Pure;"—

and not less on account of the strength which example must give to precept, than because the father and husband must necessarily know better than the recluse, all the feelings that belong to the several relations of men to one another in society, and be therein the better able to direct the lives of those who most need instruction.

Among my good friends at Irkoutsk, was the Colonel Klyminoof, commanding the mining corps in the service of the government. I met with much politeness from this gentleman, and spent some agreeable evenings in the company of himself and his friends, but conversed very little with him on account of the want of a common language between us. I was, nevertheless, indebted to him for an introductory letter with which he furnished me, when I was about to make an excursion into the country south of Irkoutsk, an account of which will be given before closing this notice of the capital of Eastern Siberia.

Among my friends, also, was Gospodin Roskildahoff, an officer in the civil service of the government in connection with the mining establishments. I was frequently at this gentleman's house; and although deprived of his conversation also for the same reason which deprived me of that of the officer above mentioned—the lack of a common tongue—I had frequent conversations with one of his daughters, who attracted much interest while I was at Irkoutsk, on account of her personal charms and her proficiency in European accomplishments, among which was fortunately a knowledge of the French language.

Perhaps those only among men who have for long periods together been deprived of familiar intercourse with any of the opposite sex, are able to appreciate fully the agreeable feelings which attend the renewal of our wonted interchange of ideas. This young

lady had not from her birth been more than a few versts out of this her native town; and although she was not wholly wanting in a general knowledge of ancient and modern history, yet of all she had read of countries beyond the bounds of the Russian empire, she had received the impression, from every scene described and every fact related, in such colours of romance, that when she spoke of England and France, her questions resembled those which we should ask of a traveller arriving from Arabia, if we had read nothing of Eastern lands save the Thousand and One Nights. To gratify her desire to see these wonderful Western countries, she thought she would sacrifice even a portion of her life; but she declared she could not continue to live happily in any country but Siberia.

But when I asked her whether, when the lovely hills and fresh valleys, with their corn fields, orchards, parks, groves, and green meadows, of which she delighted to talk, might be in reality before her eyes, she might not be tempted to abandon her native Irkoutsk, and even friends and home, she declared her attachment to the place of her birth to be such, that she hardly knew whether, even if her father were called to live in Russia, she could endure an absence from Irkoutsk for above six months. Her curiosity and enthusiasm were chiefly concerning France; and she thought me too national, when I described the aspect of my own country as more like the romantic portraits of the scenery of Western Europe, which her fancy had drawn, than that of the France which she so sighed to behold. She wished very much to hear some words of our language: but when I repeated some verses from "Comus" and the "Rape of the Lock," which have always appeared to me the most melodious of any that I am acquainted with, she was not pleased; and in comparison with French rhymes, which, I confess, have

always seemed to me most monotonous, she thought them harsh and inharmonious.

At an entertainment one evening at the domicile of one of my friends, where a favourite subject of the Siberians not less than of the Russians — the claims of the rival nations, as men are wont to call the French and the English, for pre-eminence in many particulars — was discussed, I was led by the turn of the conversation to make a few remarks concerning the enterprise of our merchants, men of science, and capitalists, upon which a very intelligent Russo-Siberian spake as follows: —

"Gospodin of London," said the Siberian, "the fame which the enterprise of your merchants and other pioneers of civilisation has justly gained you, has reached Siberia. Nevertheless, if we in this country were to be the judges of the superior claims of the two nations to pre-eminence in enterprise, we should say, that in our Irkoutsk, the last town in which any European that is not a Russian subject or exile, is found, not only have we a French merchant, but also a Parisian Professor of the French Language, both pursuing their distinct objects at a distance of several thousand versts eastward of the last place at which you may find, save the Albinos at Tomsk, which is above 1500 versts from this, any Englishman of any vocation whatsoever."

There is scarcely a custom purely national that is observed by the Russians which does not exhibit the same tendency to contrast and to extremes which have been seen in those already mentioned. There has not been wanting occasion to show that the character of the people is eminently religious. There is no Christian nation more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the religion which they profess. Nevertheless, their priests are, upon some special occasions, shunned even in the streets, and it may be said, persecuted by the very members of the

church for which they perform the offices of religion. Men even above the peasant class, of which, however, we chiefly speak, who are going out upon business of the last moment, will not leave their houses until some one has ascertained that the first passenger they may encounter will not be a priest. Were a stranger to hear this without any of the reasons from which it proceeds, he might set it down as arising from the bad character of the man, who might fear to meet one that may possibly be acquainted with his wickedness. Nevertheless, it is the mere effect of a rooted superstitious belief, that no good fortune will attend any one engaging in any enterprise or business, if the first person that he should happen to meet upon leaving his house, should be a priest. It is very true, that like most other ill-omens, which too often influence the fortunes of poor mortals, this also has its particular exorcism, which may counteract the malignant influence of the evil genius of the priest. The worst however is, that the remedy is not only not agreeable to perform, but even amounts to the persecution of the unoffending priest whom it makes a party in the matter; for the person supposing himself to be affected by the evil influence, can only escape from all its consequences by spitting upon the beard of the priest. There is no doubt, indeed, that there are many good Russians under the influence of this superstition, if the enterprise in which they suppose they must fail be not very great, who are contented to suffer the consequences of their ill-fortune, rather than be guilty of such an abominable act. Still, the condition of a priest in the street, who has to watch continually which way every man turns who chances to come out of the house he is about to pass by, in order that he may avoid the risk of having his beard spat upon, cannot be enviable. If the party coming out, however, be of the fair sex, the remedy for the evil is not quite so

disgusting. It seems to be the impression that women more easily allay all evil influences than men; for it is necessary in their case, only to throw a pin upon the priest's beard, and all the ill-consequences of the encounter are thus easily negatived.

A priest informed me that himself and many others had tried to overcome this senseless superstition, by endeavouring to convince the people that it could only be from meeting any thing evil—if, indeed, what they met signified any thing—that such ill-consequences as they dreaded could proceed; but he said that he believed that their endeavours had had but little or no effect.

Few nations are without some religious or superstitious ceremonies connected with the manner of their taking their meals. The religious ceremonies of the Russians at table have been mentioned; but among the classes in the simpler ranks of life, besides these, some mere superstitions obtain. Among these, is an impression, that if thirteen sit down to table together, one of them will die upon the night which follows. But, notwithstanding the origin of this terror, which is very apparent, though they should be ever so much open to justice or oppression, they neither dread a betrayer, nor any ill to whomsoever may be the marked one among them—that is, no other ill than a transport, and a very tranquil, though very sudden one, from the present to the future state.

They observe towards strangers that enter their dwelling, or pass by their table while they are at their meals, the same courtesy as the Spaniards, with almost as much rigour, in asking them to partake of whatever they may be eating. But their words for this purpose have been, from time immemorial, even though they should be sitting over the richest *stchee*, "Will you eat bread and salt with us?" They are not, however,

always a stiff-necked people in respect to things not directly connected with such portions of their religion as have been subjects of controversy among them. Thus, when they are over their tea, an innovation has grown up, and some change taken place in those all but sacred words which they at other times employ, and they substitute for bread and salt "tea and sugar."

The manner of drinking their tea with sugar, among all but the classes that pretend to some refinement, is different from ours. They sit sipping the tea, and usually out of glass tumblers, without sugar in it; but ever and anon they place a lump of sugar in their mouths, and crunch it between their teeth as they sip. Thus, when half a dozen tea-drinkers are occupied in this manner, the sound is not agreeable to the ear. My friend of Tomsk, so often mentioned, when we were one day taking our tea in the company of some of these people, compared the noise of the teeth crushing the sugar, to that of the mills at the gold works crushing the quartz rock.

Among all classes in Siberia, a habit is very prevalent at table, which, if harmless, is by no means elegant, and might be with advantage abandoned. This general occasion is taken to mention it, expressly to avoid seeming to be particular in the remark, and especially since it is necessary to say that it prevails more commonly among the fair sex. The ladies are, in all that is essential, very delicate at table; but as they sit apart from the gentlemen, and do not usually join in the general conversation, the time is apt to pass very heavily with them, while the courses are delayed either by the capacity of the men's stomachs or the interruptions caused by discourse; and thus they have been driven to discover some means of relieving the weariness of the time, which has led to their acquiring a very droll habit of rolling the damp crumb of the rye bread,

which is excellent for the purpose, into pills. Three or four ladies together may be sometimes seen, quite unconscious how they are occupied, to manufacture of this simple material, with their fingers, during dinner, as many of these pills as would suffice to make half an English quack's fortune without killing a single soul.

In the houses, generally, of the higher portion of the trading and other industrious classes, a glass of milk terminates the dinner. I should have thought it the very worst thing to put upon the solids that preceded it; but I am compelled to pronounce, as far as my experience goes, that it is the very best. I never drank milk to greater advantage than on these occasions, and confidently, therefore, recommend it to all our bibbers in place of red wine and white, which they sit toping till the lady of the house charitably disturbs them by a summons to tea. They may sleep better after it than after wine, and transact their affairs with more ease and pleasure the next day.

Among even well-bred Russians that I have met in Siberia, there exists in society a certain restlessness of mind, rather than want of decorum, properly so designated, which is sometimes productive of inconvenience in the ordinary intercourse of life, but especially in the conduct of social discourse. I have often witnessed interruptions to conversations of interest, that have not seemed either to cause surprise or even disappointment to either of the parties that were engaged in them. One or two instances in point recur to my memory, in which myself was a party to the discourse.

On one occasion, an eye-witness to the burning of Moscow was giving me an animated description of the scenes upon the spot during that calamitous event, when a third party changed the subject, by a single question, to a discussion upon the price and quality of the tea that we happened at the moment to be drinking,

and which appeared to be a matter of too much interest to admit of any ordinary effort bringing the discourse back to the subject from which it was drawn.

I was dining one day at the well-filled table of a hospitable couple at Irkoutsk, when a very warm discussion took place between the host and one of the guests present; and upon retiring to an adjoining apartment, I remarked to the lady of the house, that I thought it very indelicate on the part of their guest to beard a man at his own table in the manner this gentleman—whom, indeed, I thought wrong in the argument—had just done. The lady replied, "You surprise me by this remark. I believed English manners to be a fit glass for us to set up to dress our own by; but I see you are less polite than we; for with us it is the host that should cede at all times to the guest." At this instant, some call was made upon the attention of the lady; and before I had time to say, that I thought both parties, in every similar case, committed a breach of good manners, our hostess was half across the room; and as the subject from which the discussion arose was not one that it was agreeable to revive, it is probable the lady may still think, and many others with her, that when we are so fortunate as to be hosts in England, we are permitted to worry our involuntarily mute guests as much as we please.

On a particular occasion, I was conversing with an officer of high rank in the emperor's service, when the turn of the conversation led to my making the remark, that the proper mission and true field of enterprise of the Russians was within the bounds of the Chinese empire. The word mission, in the language we were speaking, suggested immediately, as it might have done in our own, and very naturally, its application in a religious sense; and thus my observation seemed to refer to the conversion of the Chinese people to Chris-

tianity. The officer, as if struck with the originality or novelty of the observation, hesitated for an instant, and then replied, "I do not approve of any interference with their religion." And before it was possible to say so much as "Nor I; it is only of European civilisation *generally* that I speak," which I wished to say, a third party drew off the attention of the officer by some question that caused him to rise, which turned the course of the conversation; and no opportunity afterwards offered itself to explain.

In one instance of a similar interruption, the impression left upon the minds of those with whom I was conversing, must have been, that I came to Siberia in search of a land where I might dwell under better institutions than those of my own country. In another case, the impression left might have been, that I was convinced that the Russian was a superior mode of Christian worship to the English.

The arrest of our accomplished and extraordinary countryman, Holman, the "blind traveller," in this country, very probably arose from some misunderstanding of this kind. It was at least commonly said in the towns which he visited, and where he was remembered with much interest, that he was taken out of the country because he described places and objects as if he had seen them. This is indeed his way of expressing himself, though, whenever it is thought necessary, he explains why he does so, if not interrupted, as he doubtless frequently was in Siberia. It would certainly improve social intercourse among the Russians, if this fault, which, as already suggested, is doubtless the offspring of natural impatience of character, were thoroughly reformed.

Upon expressing to a Russian gentleman, when an occasion happened to present itself, my surprise that the intercourse which had so long existed between his coun-

trymen and the rest of the European people, had not led to the introduction of the reformed calendar and the new style into Russia, I received the following reply: "The age," said the Russian "is not yet arrived, when such a change as this could by any means be made. To accomplish it, would require more management and firmness on the part of the government, than would be required to move the entire population into the most Western country in Europe. With the majority of the people, the question would be purely religious, and the change would be considered by them as an attempt to undermine or wholly destroy their religion."

Upon a suggestion being made, that if it were quite a religious question, as the emperor was the head of the church, he might surely, with the aid of the more instructed portion of the clergy, effect such a change, it was answered: "That such is the character of the religious people generally among the Russians, that to change alone the days of the *fêtes* of the saints in the calendar, would appear so monstrous in their eyes, that they would assuredly conclude that the emperor, known by them to have great respect for the rights of these holy personages, had actually gone mad. Nay, it was added, that those who might be reconciled to this, could never be made to understand that any thing but sorcery could circumscribe the year, and shorten the lives, as it would be deemed, of all men living twelve days."

The Russians, besides more important customs, have retained also several of the minor sort; which, though they may still obtain in parts of Germany, France, and Italy, belong properly to an earlier age in European civilisation; and some of them are doubtless of Eastern origin. When, for instance, as we wash ourselves, we find a servant come to pour water upon our hands,

which we shall not fail to do in this part at least of the empire, we are reminded of taking our dinner by a luxurious fountain in a cool and windowless apartment in the south, even though lumps of the frozen element fall from the ewer like masses of ice down the "frosty Caucasus;" and we only wish the water were warmer.

An opportunity has already occurred to mention the custom among the men of rubbing their beards one against another upon meeting and taking leave. At the sacred epoch, at the close of Lent, a custom prevails among the people of all classes without distinction, of calling upon one another and embracing, and kissing, as the French would say, *à trois reprisées*, in compliment of course to the Trinity; and certainly, if I had not this Easter my fair proportion of the scratching of beards, the paucity of my share of the treat was not from any want of the good-will and affections of the people, nor on account of my heretical character.

Nevertheless, amends is made by the decidedly agreeable practice in usage, when the leave-taking is between parties of the opposite sexes. The gentleman in this case, takes the hand of the lady, and as he stoops, and gingerly or more feelingly, presses it to his lips, the lady with her lips presses his cheek or his forehead as it may be most agreeable to her. Whence this custom is derived I know not, and whether it be as general in Russia in Europe as in Siberia, my little experience and less familiar acquaintance with the ladies in the western portion of the empire, do not enable me to say.

I may perhaps appropriately mention here a little incident that occurred while I was at Irkoutsk, which afforded a proof that the cold of this desolate region has not so chilled the animal spirits of the ladies of the land, as to have left them without some touch of the

humour and gaiety common to the younger part especially of the fair sex every where else. The news happened to arrive before I left Irkoutsk, of the breaking out of the last revolution in France; and a day or two after this was known, upon calling on one of my acquaintances among the exiles, I found a party assembled, composed of the free, as well as the constrained, inhabitants of the town. On entering the room, I perceived that the whole party were fallen into a state of sadness so unlike any thing that the purely political news might be supposed to produce, that my curiosity was not a little excited concerning the cause.

The host rose slowly from a sofa upon which he had been reclining with his *chiboock* in his hand, and returned my suppressed salute rather with signs than words, and handed me a chair, and then returned to his own seat. There was now a minute or two of the most absolute silence. After this, the lady of the house, rising from her seat at the opposite side of the room, advanced towards me with an open letter in her hand, which she presented to me to read, and then seated herself upon a chair beside me. Had the letter contained a copy of an order for the transportation of every one present to the mines of Nertchinsk, it is impossible that the countenance of this lady could have expressed more intelligibly her sense of the sad event. The letter was written in French; and such was the pithy character of the intelligence it contained, that, although I did not afterwards obtain a copy of it, I believe I can almost remember every word. It was dated from Paris, and appeared to be written by a nephew of M. Richie, my last travelling companion, to whom it was addressed, and ran, translated, as follows:—

"My dear Uncle.—I know not whether this will precede or follow the astonishing news which must at any

rate sooner or later reach you, of the revolution which has driven the Orleans family from the throne of France, and sent the king and M. Guizot into exile in England. But what horror will you not experience when you learn that, instead of ending like the last revolution in a mere change of dynasty and a formal charter, a new reign of terror has already commenced under the name of a republic, and similar atrocities to those that followed the first revolution, are actually in operation! Marshal Bugeaud is at this very hour sweeping the streets of Paris with his cannon, and the guillotine, now called after the author of all our misfortunes, guizotine, which has already decapitated the most illustrious of our citizens and such of the royal family as had not time to escape, is rivalling its prototype in the number of its victims, and the rapidity with which they are despatched. You will perceive, should you get this, that my handwriting is somewhat disguised, which has been done as a measure of security in case of my letter becoming opened by the police."

As I raised my eyes from this epistle, M. Richie rose from his seat, and came up to the place where I was sitting; and upon my turning the letter over to look at the post mark, he observed as he also examined this, that it must be the new republican stamp. Upon this, several of the party who had not before noticed the stamp, came up to examine it; and all agreed, that it was done by some hastily adapted instrument, but none conjectured any more. And as the silence was now broken, every one began to speculate upon the consequences of the cruelties in the act of performance at Paris, whilst scarce a remark was made concerning the consequences of the revolution itself. And strange to say, such was the perfect French style of the letter, and the cleverness with which the imitation of a stamp had

een contrived, that it was not until after two days' re-
ection upon the horrors disclosed, that the forgery
ras discovered. And it was only because it was known
hat there was but one hand in Irkoutsk that was
apable of the performance, that the young lady author
of the letter was known.

## CHAP. XXXVI.

### IRKOUTSK—*continued.*

A new Governor-general.—Reports of the new Governor's Character.—State into which the Administration of Affairs had fallen.—Dependence of Society upon the Chief.—Sensation caused by Accounts of the Governor's Acts on his Journey.—Terrors of the *Chinovnik.*—Governor's Arrival.—Hopes of the better Portion of the People.—Despair of the Bad.—Traveller's Visit to the Governor.—Traveller's Reception.—Palace Dinner.—Governor's Lady.—Rooms.—Company at Table.—Governor's Example of Reform in Table Extravagance.

THE most remarkable incident that the annals of Siberia may record during a period of several years, will be the arrival at Irkoutsk of General Mourovieff, who had been appointed to the government of this great province, and reached the seat of his authority at the time I had the good fortune to be there.

General Mourovieff, who is still in the prime of life, after distinguishing himself in a high command in the army of the Caucasus, was appointed to this government, and arrived upon the 14th of March of this year. And certainly, no advent of any ordinary prince to a throne ever caused more sensation among his subjects, than the new governor-general's assumption of this important government caused throughout the territory which it comprehends. The appointment had taken place some time previous to this epoch; and rumour had filled the land with various reports concerning the character of the new governor, out of which some gathered hope of relief from inconveniences that are inseparable from the condition of every one in a penal

colony, and others were plunged in despair, from the dread that greater power, which it was reported had been conferred upon the general, than that which had been hitherto enjoyed by the governors in Siberia, would be but the signal of greater license to every kind of oppressor under whom they suffered.

This portion of Siberia had been left for several years without a chief fully authorised to exercise the power indispensable to a colony of the kind, containing many settlements almost entirely composed of the refuse of the population of Russia, and embracing so vast a territory, inhabited by many distinct semi-barbarous tribes, and where the distances between the settlements are too great to admit of the intercourse necessary to obtain the objects of government through ordinary means. Thus the protection of the weak against the strong, and the administration of justice according to established laws, it will be easily conceived, had fallen into sad disorder. The *chinovnik* oppressed the peasant, and sometimes the rich, the poor; and the exiles, wherever they were far removed from the observation of the civil governor in authority at Irkoutsk, were worried in a manner which the spirit of the law never intended, and no competent authority sanctioned. Even the trading classes throughout every district of the country, felt the worst effects of the want of a fully authorised and competent head of society.

In no country, is the condition of the inhabitants more dependent upon the character of the chief administering the government than in Siberia, where the uniform is, and must be, absolute, and without question obeyed, even though worn by a sot, who is less conscious of his actions than the irrational creature that acts by the impulse of its nature alone. The character, indeed, of the lower grades of the officials had itself degenerated, on account of the relaxation of discipline attendant

upon the long-delayed appointment of the wanting chief.

A few days previous to the general's arrival, I was at an evening entertainment given by one of the richer inhabitants of the town, where a great sensation reigned, in consequence of the news of the arrival of the new governor at Krasnoyarsk. Every one was inquiring for some account that might serve to hang a conjecture upon, concerning the future policy of the expected chief; and it happened that among the reports there was one that, if it should turn out true, was tolerably decisive upon at least one important point; and the story itself was one in which I felt especial interest. It was said, that the new governor-general had, immediately upon his arrival at the town above named, sent for the same exile in particular who has been mentioned in a previous chapter of these travels, and demanded of him, whether he had any cause of complaint, on account of the administration of the law in his case, and that he had accompanied this demand with a promise of redress, in the event of his having been subjected to any act of oppression.

Every one during the evening seemed absorbed in thought. The commercial men and speculators among the company conversed anxiously but openly. In the meantime the *chinovnik* stood apart, and with eyes fixed on the ground, or with faces turned from the gaze of any honest eye that might chance to observe them too closely, whispered every one to "his nearest mate" words that, if we might judge from the Satanic expression with which they were accompanied, were more like those of the despair of the fallen spirits awaking from their stupor in the fiery gulf, than those of good and true men.

An honest Swiss whom I had with me at this time, had occasion on the day after this important news reached

Irkoutsk, to visit the principal of the public offices, where he found, as he informed me, the utmost terror and confusion prevailing. "There's more alarm," said he, "at the report of the new governor having done, or contemplated doing, an act of justice or humanity on the road to the seat of his government, than doubtless there would be, if news had arrived that a tyrant was on his way to practise his unlicensed cruelties, and to license the oppressions of others."

At length, upon the day above mentioned, the general reached the seat of his government, and the hour of reckoning for those who had dishonoured the uniform which they wore was at hand.

The whole town was now in a perfect state of moral trepidation. My honest servant, who had a great abhorrence of the whole tribe of the demoralised classes, of whom he had seen a great deal, was full of delight at the joy to the good and the consternation to the wicked, that the arrival of the general had occasioned, and of which he gave me some animated pictures concerning what fell under his observation. Suffice it, that the first *levée* of the new governor-general quite confirmed all the hopes of the better portion of the public servants, as well as of the trading classes, and completed the despair of the evil-doers of every class in the town, and, as soon as known, of all the oppressors throughout the country.

A day or two after the general's arrival, I made a point of attending one of his excellency's ordinary *levées*. It had been my intention to request the civil governor to do me the honour of presenting me to the higher representative of their common sovereign. Not that I doubted the politeness of a Russian governor, after the experience I had had; but, as my letters from St. Petersburg were addressed to the civil governor, then the sole representative of his sovereign, I thought

it would be a less abrupt and the proper course. Some persons, however, who were conversant with what was passing in the public offices, thought it not well for me to do so while the governor-general was yet in the midst of his examinations of the proceedings and accounts of all the public servants alike, from the highest to the lowest. I therefore made my appearance at the *levée*, unaccompanied by patron, friend, or attendant.

The palace of the governor-in-chief is a huge and unsightly building of stone and brick, which had been erected by one of the millionnaires of Irkoutsk, of whom it had been bought by the government for the purpose to which it was now appropriated.

After passing the guard of honour at the entrance, and the usual doors, and the soldiers within and without, an attendant took possession of my *schouba*, cap, and upper boots, and, after leading me through an ante-room, introduced me into the hall in which the general held his *levée*. Upon entering, I found about twenty of the *chinovnik* standing stretched out in a crescent, according to custom, with their faces turned towards the door which led to the governor's inner apartment; and I took my place at the end of the curve line of expectants, which was the nearest to the door I had entered, and the furthest from that upon which all eyes were bent.

Some time passed before any footstep broke the significant silence that prevailed. In the meantime, I derived some amusement from watching the countenances of the worthy company during these moments of their fearful expectation. At every sound, whencesoever it proceeded, though no louder than that of a "mouse stirring," so plainly were marked upon the features and the attitudes of these men the varied emotions that they felt, that I doubt not that a good

physiognomist might have read the lives of every one of them as they stood thus before him. But I was content to observe the clear sign, that there was at least a conviction among them, that a vigorous government was about to relieve the oppressed, and ameliorate the condition of the people of Eastern Siberia, and perhaps to make a step towards raising the bold native races above their present estate, to partake of the advantages of civilised government.

The first indication that the moment of audience was at hand, came with the entrance of the general's aide-de-camp, who, just as he was about to speak to one of the parties present, saw another party, which his discernment at once discovered was not a Siberian *chinovnik*, if even a subject of his sovereign. The young officer now advanced towards the spot where I was standing, and addressing me very politely, inquired whether I wished to see the general; and upon being answered in the affirmative, immediately returned into the inner room.

In a short space of time, the general entered attended by the aide-de-camp, and with a soldier's freedom, when unrestrained by official ceremony, entered at once into conversation with his unexpected visitor.

I did not at present acquaint his excellency with my position as regarded my letters of protection; and what passed was merely such words of course as were applicable to the occasion, and they were not many. Nevertheless, I did not withdraw before I received a polite invitation to be a frequent visitor at the palace.

To the first of the palace dinners at which I had the honour to sit, I came by particular invitation, which was, however, sent only because I had not taken an early advantage of the custom of the country to make my appearance without giving cause for that ceremony. I had taken advantage, however, of a hint given me

with the invitation, to be early in attendance, in order to receive an introduction to, and have the opportunity of making the acquaintance of, the lady of the palace before the dinner was served, and to whom I was now formally presented.

The governor-general's wife was a native of France, but I believe of Russian extraction, and might at this time have been termed still a bride, as her marriage had been celebrated but a few months before; and the journey to Irkoutsk, though rather long for the occasion, might be considered the wedding trip.

I found the lady full of the grace and elegance still almost universal among her countrywomen, and as full of the romance of life in its bloom, as if her journey over the wastes of snow had been through such scenery as that of the southern provinces of "la belle France:" and she talked of the journeys of thousands of versts, projected by the general, whom she intended to accompany upon several expeditions during the approaching summer, just as untravelled Parisian ladies might speak of trips to Tours or Fontainebleau. The marriage, indeed—or at least it was so reported, and, as I could not doubt, very truly—was not like many celebrated at Paris, mere *à la mode*, but rather, as we term our connubial alliances, "made in heaven," or "*un mariage d'inclination*," and from which naturally follows that, whatsoever is the husband such is the wife. It needs not, therefore, be added, that the foreign guest was graciously received.

The rooms were spacious, but not extravagantly decorated; and they did not appear to contain any articles of mere luxury, with the exception of some lamps and chandeliers, for which the inhabitants of the palace were indebted to a Russian embassy to China, very much like that of Lord Amherst, and which terminated in a similar manner. The Russian ambassadors had advanced some distance into the interior of the country,

which they had entered by Kiachta, with their presents with them, of which these articles were a part, when they met the Chinese authorities appointed to conduct them to Pekin. But already the same humiliating terms were prescribed to them, to be performed in the presence of one of the representatives of the Chinese emperor, that were offered to the English ambassador, and being in the same manner refused, caused the failure of the object of the expedition, and the return of the ambassadors, who, judging that the more bulky articles which they had with them, were not worth carrying back to St. Petersburg, left them for the benefit of the future occupants of this palace, where they remain a monument of the historical event which brought them to Siberia.

The dinner party consisted of about twenty guests, composed, in the main, of the superior class of the *chinovnik*, and was necessarily somewhat formal. There was but one lady among the guests,—the mistress of the public school above mentioned for the young ladies of Irkoutsk, whom I had before met at the civil governor's. This lady sat on one side of the noble hostess, while myself sat on the other; and, as no one near us knew any language but the Russian, and our hostess had not yet made more progress than myself in the tongue of the land, and the general was too distant to afford us the benefit of his conversation, we made a little party for the time apart.

If there be any thing in the ordinary intercourse of society, of equal interest to the conversation of a young wife still full of the warmth of sentiment proper to youth, just freed from the restraint prescribed by propriety to the unprotected or inexperienced girl, I have not met with, or have not been able to appreciate it. But it was now with augmented pleasure that I felt that the inhabitants of the country in whose affairs

I began at this time to take much interest, would have an example of the family life, as well as of refinement, at the head of society in their capital, that could not fail to produce many substantial benefits to the whole community.

In other respects, the dinner party at the palace offered but one novelty, which was at once an example of moral interest set to the company present, and one of the evidences of the determination of the governor-general to lay the axe to the very root of the tree of evil that had poisoned the land with its pestiferous fruits. It consisted in the substitution of a kind of wine made of the wild cherries of the country, for the champagne and burgundy at the prodigal tables of the millionnaires, though not to the entire exclusion of those finer or more esteemed because more expensive wines.

Nothing can be wholesomer, and nothing of more delicate flavour, than this Siberian beverage. It was now indeed the first time that I tasted it; but I never afterwards drank any other wine in the country, when it was to be had, though in truth, it must be confessed, this was of very rare occurrence. The dinner ended like all other dinners at all times in that country, by the guests saluting the patron saint, as well as the host and hostess; after which, a cup of coffee in another apartment completed the entertainment.

## CHAP. XXXVII.

### IRKOUTSK—*continued.*

Condition of the Exiles.—The Survivors of the Political Exiles of the last Insurrection in Russia.—The Treatment during different Periods of their Exile.—Final Settlement.—Condition since that Epoch.—Their Wives and Property.—Their Relation in Society to the Criminal Exiles.—The Ladies' Feelings.—Their Friends.—Their Absence at Public Balls.—Not excluded from the Government-house.—Treatment of their Sons.—Sufferings during Scarcity.—Increase of Allowance.—Arrival of an old Servant of one of the Ladies.—English Composition by a young Lady.—Critique on Russian Authors.—Meteorological Journal.

It is now incumbent to offer a few more remarks upon the character and condition of the exiles who comprise a considerable proportion of the population of the capital of Eastern Siberia; and they will be made with perfect confidence in the genuineness of the sources of information from which they are derived. But as nothing is concealed from the stranger, and nothing done in secret in Siberia, all who feel sufficient interest in the subject may, through the most regular channels, inform themselves concerning every thing which regards both the law, and the manner in which it is administered in this country. They may, indeed, learn every particular that relates to the condition of every class of exiles, from the former aspirant to sovereign rule, down to the *prolétaire*, and the most petty criminals, of whom there are many who have actually committed offences for the very purpose of getting sent, at the government charge, from a state of bondage to enjoy the freedom of Russian subjects in Siberia.

It will be remembered, that while we had the picture of the society of Tomsk open before us, the opportunity was taken to expose the character and condition of the criminal exiles in particular with which that town and district abound. As in Irkoutsk, however, the proportion of those who suffer for state offences is much greater than at Tomsk, it is chiefly of what are called the political exiles that we must now speak.

In this town, among others, are assembled the chief part of the survivors of those who were the leaders, or who were otherwise compromised, in the last great attempt to overthrow the government. They were condemned to labour for life in the mines of Nertchinsk; but into these abodes of the worst criminals which the empire in Asia can furnish, they never descended. The labour which they performed for some time, consisted, for the most part, in various occupations, which were not rigorously enforced, the chief of which was, grinding corn in large hand-mills. They were nevertheless confined in a prison which was at first windowless, and gloomy, and wretched, though it did not long so remain. It happened, and it reflects indelible honour upon the women of Russia, that the wives of nearly all those who were so fortunate as to have them, followed the fortunes of their husbands; and their first act after their arrival was, to petition the imperial government, that there might be windows pierced in the prison, and that a few comforts, which their husbands were then without, might be conceded; and the prayer of their petition was granted.

For the remaining portion of two years, these exiles continued daily employed at the work above mentioned, under a superintendence so mild, that no more labour was exacted from them, than they themselves found it convenient to perform, and which was indeed necessary, in the words of one of the principal

among them, "to relieve the weariness of the time, and gain them appetites."

At the end of this period they were released from prison, and permitted to live in the villages in the vicinity, where most of them resided for three years. After this, a third step in the amelioration of their condition was made, in giving them permission to choose any village within the same government, in which they would prefer to settle as colonists. They generally chose such of those as were not far distant from the capital, and they now engaged in the cultivation of the land. But finally, at the end of five or seven years at the farthest, they were, if they thought proper, allowed to settle in this or any other town, according to their inclination. From this time they have been subjected to no other restraint than the interdiction from changing the places of residence which they chose, and in the prohibition from practising any art, or carrying on any branch of commerce.

Those who had no more than the government allowance for their support, generally continued still to cultivate the land in the villages; while others, whose friends in Russia sent them relief, which was always permitted to the extent of a thousand rubles a year in money, with any quantity of necessaries or luxuries, lived in a comfortable condition in this and other towns. Some of those who reside here, are indebted to the good fortune of their wives having possessed separate property, which was not confiscated or transferred to other hands. This indeed has placed them in a position in which their example, had its effects not been counteracted by the consequences of the excessive riches since drawn from the mines, would have tended to raise the Siberian character, and contributed to the general advance and refinement of the inhabitants of the country.

The relative moral or social position of these exiles

in regard to the free inhabitants of the country, has generally depended in a great measure upon the manner in which the law has been interpreted or administered. I made very frequent visits to several of their houses during the time of my sojourn at this town; and I was accustomed to meet there, officials, merchants, and mining proprietors, and others among the respectable inhabitants of Irkoutsk, and I do not believe any one was restrained from visiting them by the police, or abstained from so doing from the fear of being suspected of disaffection towards the government. But I must mention that it happened, that a few weeks previous to the remarkable event mentioned in the last chapter, most of their friends ceased to visit them. This, however, was justly attributed to the fear of a change of policy with the change of the representative of the sovereign. During this time, nevertheless, I continued to see them as usual, and was witness to the effects which this apparent falling off of their friends produced. The remarks that were made, indeed, were but few, and alluded merely to the feelings natural to what recalls the past, and reminds us of the reality of the ills of life, and the sometimes irreparable consequences of a single act. One of the ladies said to me, when depressed in spirits by missing the visits which she had been accustomed to receive: "We cannot blame our friends that they have forsaken us, when we consider our position." The youthful days of this lady had been spent in England, and her holidays, I believe, when at school, at Warwick Castle. Faint as may be the descriptions herein given of this dreary region by one not subjected to the restraints which depress our spirits and magnify our ills, yet, after what has been said on this subject, the change from the ever fresh and fair scenes of Warwickshire to the dreary wastes of this sterile land may be very well imagined.

Another lady, whose reflections, when I conversed with her on several occasions, had in a more lively manner been turned towards "times long past, but still with woe remembered," led me into a less frequented apartment than that in which we had been sitting, and, when she had directed my attention to several portraits of her own and her husband's ancestors, which hung upon the walls, she said in an accent at once of resignation and melancholy, and speaking English, in which language she always conversed with me, "Behold all that remains of our former glory." These were the most complaining, as well as impressive words that I heard uttered in sad and direct allusion to the state of things long past, during the whole time of my stay in Irkoutsk.

But upon the reception of the news of the governor-general having had an interview with the exile of Krasnoyarsk, which caused so much alarm among the *chinovnik*, there was a grand press again by the former visitors towards the houses of the principal exiles; and all now already went on again much the same as before.

After the new governor's arrival, every thing wore an air of more gaiety and more confidence than ever; and often I heard several of the exiles, with whom I was well acquainted, say, that the sole penalty they now suffered, consisted in the restraint upon their return into Russia.

At public balls, of which there were two while I was at Irkoutsk, they did not attend, though I do not believe their absence arose from any other cause than the respect which they felt for the general loyal feelings of the people, which might perhaps in some particular instance be carried to a degree that would inconvenience them. Yet I met several of them on different occasions at the tea-hour, as well as in the morning, at the governor-general's, when measures

were discussed that were under consideration for the improvement and advance of the country; and I could not help remarking with what eagerness the soldier from the Caucasus sought information through the best channels that it might be obtained, to aid the grand object of his mission in Siberia. I also met frequently at the houses of the same exiles, both the governor-general's private secretary, Gospodin Struve, and his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Moltchanoff, two young men of energy of character and abilities, and both of whom were interesting themselves in the welfare of the country. Mr. Struve is the son of the astronomer royal of Russia. The aide-de-camp, I have since heard, afterwards married the only daughter of one of the ladies to whom I have made particular allusion. This same lady, I may take the opportunity to mention, had a son also, at this time about to finish his studies at the gymnasium, and who, as I have been since informed, has now a commission in the regular army, and is attached to the corps at present at Irkoutsk.

The period at which the exiles generally, experienced the greatest sufferings, was at the beginning of the present great mining speculations. At this time, the prices of every necessary augmented so much, that they were unable to procure the comforts to which they had been accustomed. But upon the representation of this at St. Petersburg, their allowance was increased in proportion to the augmentation of prices, which enabled them to resume the way of life which they had been obliged for a season to forego.

A little circumstance occurred at the house of one of the ladies above alluded to, while I was at Irkoutsk, which, as having some relation to our present subject, I cannot pass over. A party of criminal exiles arrived from Russia, among whom there was a woman a little stricken in years, who asked immediately, upon reaching the

town, for permission to be allowed to make a visit to this house. Her request being granted, she came and obtained entrance, and rushing into the room where the lady of the house was sitting in company with several other persons, threw herself upon the ground before her, and after kissing her feet and embracing her knees, while still kneeling, made herself known as one of the domestic serfs of the lady's family in the time of their younger days. This poor woman had spent the whole of twenty-one years that had intervened from the time of the voluntary exile of her then young mistress, in endeavours to procure permission to follow her into Siberia; and, finally, despairing of this, she had set off on her journey towards the country she sighed to reach, alone and on foot, in the hope that she might be taken up, as the custom is, and classed among the *prolétaires*, or vagabonds without pretension to any lawful occupation, and sent at the government charge to the very country to which she desired to go; and her expectation was very soon fulfilled. Nevertheless, her proper penal journey was ended at Tobolsk, where those who are condemned for the lighter offences are still sometimes sent, and which it happened had been designed for her resting-place. But not having, upon her arrival there, obtained her object or made half her journey, she petitioned the authorities that she might be sent further into the country; and the policy of the government being to settle Eastern Siberia in particular, no difficulty stood in the way of this. Thus, after a two years' march from the time she commenced her first journey, she arrived, and now found a happy home in the bosom of the once tender child of whom she had had the care in the time of her own youth.

I shall close these several remarks concerning the exiles, by the introduction of an exact copy of a little

piece of English composition, written by the daughter of one of the anciently noble ladies now residing in this town. I am persuaded that it will be perused with interest; and it will at the same time tend to confirm what has been said of the state of society and of education at the capital of Eastern Siberia. It is first necessary, however, in order to its just appreciation, to state precisely what it arose from, and what it was intended for. It might otherwise be supposed to pretend to more than ever entered into the head of the fair writer to conceive.

While I was at Irkoutsk, this young lady had done me the favour to read English with me occasionally, for the benefit of having her accent, which was all but perfectly pure, still corrected; and as one favour generally begets a fancied claim to another, I begged of her, when I was about to depart, that she would write for me, something from her own unaided thoughts in my native language, upon any subject that was agreeable to her, that I might keep this as a memorial of herself and her family; and the little account of the Russian authors which follows, she sent to me by her papa on the eve of my departure.

## "PRINCIPAL OF THE RUSSIAN POETS AND WRITERS OF THESE LAST YEARS."

---

"PUSHKIN, the most correct and elegant of the Russian poets. The best of his original poems are *The Fountains of Bakehisary; The Prisoner of Caucasus, Boris Godounoff*, a tragedy; *The Battle of Poltava*, a great poem; *Cuslan and Ludonila*, a tale; *Eogueni Oneguin*, a kind of imitation of Lord Byron's *Don Juan*.

"PUSHKIN has also written the *History of Pugatchoff's Rebellion*, and many tales in prose. He died in the year 1838, having been killed in a duel.

"KRILOFF, a fabulist. The Russian public are very fond of his fables, that are written in a style simple and correct, and appropriated to the national taste, which is more inclined to satire than apologue. He died some six or five years ago, very old.

"THORAMZINA, author of the *History of Russia*. Death did not allow him to bring it farther than the year 1612.

"LERMANTOFF has written a great deal of small poetry, and some tales in prose. The scene of his action is most part on the Caucasus, where he was killed in a duel some years ago.

"MARLINSKY, whose proper name is ALEXANDER BESTUJEFF, wrote many tales and novels in prose. His style is somewhat turgid; *Analot Bek* and *Mulla Nuhr* are the last of his works, the heroes of these two novels are Caucasian highlanders. He was killed in the year 1839, on the shores of the Black Sea, by the Circassians.

"JUKOVSKY, sweet and elegant poet; but most of his poems are translations from German and English poets.

"KUKOLNIK, author of many tragedies.

"KHOMIAKOFF has written small poetry.

COUNTESS ROSTOPCHIN is making a fine use of her *pen* in verse and prose.

"GOGAL and DAHL are tale writers much valued by the public, especially the first of them. COUNT SOLAGUB can be added to them.

"At the head of the journalists, we must place NICHOLAY COLERAY, who died some years ago.

"During many years he has published a monthly review under the name of *Telegraph of Moscow*. He wrote also the *History of the Russian People*, in opposition to KAROMZIA, who entitled his own, *History of the Russian State*. Different tales and comedies of his own, and translations from SHAKESPEARE and German dramatists, made his name renowned in the Russian literature. He died four or five years ago.

"The present journalists, KRAIEVSKY, SENKOUSKY, PLETNEFF, are publishers of monthly reviews. GRETEB and BULGARIN are publishing the *Northern Bee*, a daily paper, which has nothing remarkable in it."

## METEOROLOGICAL JOURNAL KEPT AT IRKOUTSK BY A RUSSIAN GENTLEMAN, FROM DECEMBER THE 1ST, 1847, TO MAY THE 5TH, 1848.

Number of degrees of Réaumur at sunrise, and remarks.

| Date. | Degrees. | State of the Weather. |
|---|---|---|
| December 1 | —22 | |
| 2 | —24 | |
| 3 | —26½ | |
| 4 | —21 | |
| 5 | —22 | |
| 6 | —25½ | |
| 7 | —22 | |
| 8 | —15 | Cloudy. |
| 9 | —22 | Storm. |
| 10 | —32 | Sunshine. |
| 11 | —26 | |
| 12 | —16 | Snow. |
| 13 | —11 | Storm. |
| 14 | —20 | |
| 15 | —19½ | |
| 16 | —21 | Nebulous. |
| 17 | —15 | Snow. |
| 18 | —15 | |
| 19 | —16½ | Storm. |
| 20 | —26 | Snow. |
| 21 | —16 | |
| 22 | —14 | |
| 23 | —12 | Windy. |
| 24 | —16 | Storm. |
| 25 | —19 | Snow-storm. |
| 26 | —15 | Storm. |
| 27 | —14 | Snow. |
| 28 | —18 | Sunshine. |
| 29 | —27 | |
| 30 | —23 | |
| 31 | —21 | |
| 1848 January 1 | —24 | |
| 2 | —16 | Snow and Wind. |
| 3 | —15½ | Sunshine. |
| 4 | —19 | Cloudy. |
| 5 | —17½ | Snow. |
| 6 | —21 | Sunshine. |

METEOROLOGICAL JOURNAL—*continued.*

| Date. | | Degrees. | State of the Weather. |
|---|---|---|---|
| January | 7 | —30½ | |
| | 8 | —28 | |
| | 9 | —31¾ | |
| | 10 | —33½ | |
| | 11 | —22½ | Sunshine. |
| | 12 | —30 | |
| | 13 | —28 | Fog in the morning, and Sunshine afterwards. |
| | 14 | —40 | |
| | 15 | —38 | |
| | 16 | —35 | |
| | 17 | —25 | Sun and Wind. |
| | 18 | —23 | Ditto. |
| | 19 | —25 | Sunshine. |
| | 20 | —22 | |
| | 21 | —24 | |
| | 22 | —16 | |
| | 23 | —16½ | Snow. |
| | 24 | —23 | Ditto. |
| | 25 | —16 | Sunshine. |
| | 26 | —16½ | Nebulous. |
| | 27 | —21½ | Sunshine. |
| | 28 | —15 | |
| | 29 | —20 | |
| | 30 | —21 | |
| | 31 | —23½ | |
| February | 1 | —11 | Wind, Nebulous. |
| | 2 | —25 | Ditto and Sun. |
| | 3 | —29 | Sunshine. |
| | 4 | —23 | |
| | 5 | —23 | |
| | 6 | —21 | |
| | 7 | —22 | Wind and Nebulous. |
| | 8 | —21 | |
| | 9 | —16 | Cloudy. |
| | 10 | —12 | Snow. |
| | 11 | —22 | Sunshine. |
| | 12 | —13 | Snow. |
| | 13 | —13 | |
| | 14 | —17 | Wind, Sunshine. |
| | 15 | —13 | Cloudy. |
| | 16 | —12 | Sunshine. |
| | 17 | —10 | Nebulous. |
| | 18 | — 8 | Snow. |
| | 19 | —11 | Sunshine. |
| | 20 | —18 | |
| | 21 | —17 | Cloudy. |
| | 22 | —20 | Sunshine. |
| | 23 | —19 | |
| | 24 | —20 | |

METEOROLOGICAL JOURNAL—*continued.*

| Date. | | Degrees. | State of the Weather. |
|---|---|---|---|
| February | 25 | —20 | |
| | 26 | —13 | Snow. |
| | 27 | —10 | |
| | 28 | — 8 | Nebulous. |
| | 29 | —19 | Sunshine. |
| March | 1 | — 9 | Storm. |
| | 2 | — 8 | |
| | 3 | —15 | Sunshine. |
| | 4 | —23 | |
| | 5 | —21 | |
| | 6 | —18 | Wind S.S., Snow at night. |
| | 7 | —13 | Cloudy. |
| | 8 | —18 | Sunshine. |
| | 9 | —17 | Ditto. |
| | 10 | —20 | Ditto. |
| | 11 | —19 | Ditto. |
| | 12 | —12 | Much Snow. |
| | 13 | —12 | Sunshine. |
| | 14 | —15 | Wind S.S. Morning Snow. |
| | 15 | —16 | Much Snow and Wind. |
| | 16 | —17 | Sun and Wind. |
| | 17 | —24 | Ditto. |
| | 18 | —22 | Ditto. |
| | 19 | —18 | Strong Wind. |
| | 20 | —13 | Wind. |
| | 21 | —12 | Sunshine. |
| | 22 | — 7 | Nebulous. Wind. |
| | 23 | —10 | South Wind. |
| | 24 | — 4 | Cloudy. |
| | 25 | — 7 | Sunshine. |
| | 26 | —10 | South Wind. |
| | 27 | — 1 | Nebulous. |
| | 28 | — 0 | Storm. |
| | 29 | —1 | South Wind. |
| | 30 | — 8 | Nebulous. |
| | 31 | — 7 | Strong Wind. |
| April | 1 | — 8½ | S. Wind. |
| | 2 | — 3 | |
| | 3 | — 0 | Nebulous. |
| | 4 | — 4 | Ditto. |
| | 5 | — 5 | Snow. |
| | 6 | — 2 | Nebulous, Wind. |
| | 7 | — 6 | Cloudy. |
| | 8 | — 2 | Ditto. |
| | 9 | — 4 | Great Snow. |
| | 10 | — 0 | Ditto. |
| | 11 | — 8½ | South Wind. |
| | 12 | — 8 | Ditto. |
| | 13 | — 3½ | Ditto. |

METEOROLOGICAL JOURNAL—*continued.*

| Date. | | Degrees. | State of the Weather. |
|---|---|---|---|
| April | 14 | + 3 | South Wind. |
| | 15 | + 1 | Cloudy. |
| | 16 | — 0 | Great Snow. |
| | 17 | — 0½ | Ditto. |
| | 18 | — 2 | Cloudy. |
| | 19 | + 4 | Snow. |
| | 20 | + 2 | Ditto. |
| | 21 | + 2 | Ditto. |
| | 22 | — 1 | Ditto. |
| | 23 | — 7½ | Sunshine and Wind. |
| | 24 | — 0 | Cloudy and Wind. |
| | 25 | + 1 | Fine Weather. |
| | 26 | + { 3 / 16 | Ditto. / At noon. |
| | 27 | + 5 | Strong Wind. |
| | 28 | — 0 | Ditto. |
| | 29 | + 2 | Wind, and afterwards Snow. |
| | 30 | — 2 | Snow. |
| May | 1 | — 4 | Strong Wind. |
| | 2 | — 5 | Ditto. |
| | 3 | — 2 | Cloudy and East Wind. |
| | 4 | — 2½ | Ditto. |
| | 5 | — 1 | Ditto. |

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
A. and G. A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-street-Square.

# TRAVELS

IN

# S I B E R I A.

BY S. S. HILL, ESQ.

. . . "These unfrequented *wilds*
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns."
*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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# TRAVELS IN SIBERIA.

## CHAPTER I.

### JOURNEY FROM IRKOUTSK TO THE BORDER TOWNS OF SIBERIA AND CHINA.

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ABOUT 550 versts south-east of Irkoutsk, are situated the border towns of the Russian and Chinese territories, Kiachta and Maimatchin, which form the gateway of the sole channel of all the intercourse carried on between these two great but dissimilar empires. During the time of my residence at Irkoutsk, I made a journey to these remote and remarkable places; and I had the opportunity of seeing the Chinese town of Maimatchin, and its inhabitants, who are composed exclusively of the original race that inhabit central Asia, and concerning whom so little is really known throughout the rest of the world, under fortunate circumstances.

I made a visit, also, upon the same journey, to the Khomba Lama, or Buddhist high-priest of the Bouriats,

who have been already mentioned among the subjects of the Russian emperor in this part of his dominions. All that I had the opportunity of seeing, and all that I experienced upon this journey, more strongly engaged my interest, than any thing that had fallen under my observation at any former time during these travels; I shall, therefore, describe what I saw and felt with as much minuteness as the occasion may seem to admit. But before commencing the account of the journey, it is necessary to introduce a character by whom I was accompanied, in the capacity of servant and interpreter.

Since I had been in the capital of Eastern Siberia, I had had only a Russian servant; and as he was not acquainted with any language but his own, I did not think his services sufficient for my purpose in accomplishing this journey. I had not acquired enough of the Russian language, to transact more than the most necessary and ordinary business of a traveller; and it was not probable that I should meet many Russians in this part of the country, who spoke any other language than their own. After some inquiry, I was told that there was a free Swiss in Irkoutsk who, it was known, spoke the Russian language, and it was thought, would gladly embrace the opportunity of accompanying me. I sent word to this foreigner, therefore, to request that he would call at my house; and as he had already heard of my want, he came prepared for the proposition I had to make to him. He had been some years engaged in preserving provisions for the use of the caravans which pass the desert districts of Siberia, and had become weary of this occupation, and he did not hesitate a moment to enter into an engagement to serve me in the double capacity of travelling servant and interpreter; and minor matters were easily arranged.

All or most countries and most people have their

holy months or days, and the Chinese are not among the exceptions. The most sacred of the Chinese festivals occurs during the moon that usually agrees with our month of February. This is called "the Festival of the White Moon;" and as we were now at that period of the year, it was important so to choose the time for this journey as to admit of our visiting the grave neighbours of the Siberians, in case it should be possible for us so to do, when they might be seen in their gayest, and probably their most accommodating, humour.

We left Irkoutsk on the first of February, in the little secure *sani* which I had brought from Krasnoyarsk. We set off in the evening as usual; but it was less on this occasion to conform to the almost universal custom, than that we might so time our stages, as to enable us to arrive at the shores of the great Lake Baikal, which lay directly in our route, at the proper hour to take the ice without any delay, and which, on account of the time occupied in crossing, and the necessity for daylight, ought to be at the beginning of the day.

I had not chosen this season, so much, indeed, on account of the festival for itself, as from the hope of more easily overcoming the greatest obstacle to entering the Chinese territory, which I was told I should experience. Some of the merchants informed me, that it would be impossible, and others that it would be dangerous, at any time, for an Englishman above all other people, to attempt to pass the frontier, on account of the hatred borne our countrymen by the whole population beyond the border. And as to any disguise, had I been willing to deny my nation, it was certain that it would be impossible to escape Chinese scrutiny. The enterprise at this time, it was thought, too, would be yet more difficult than usual, on account of its being known, or reported at least, that fresh troubles had just broken out in

the south of China between the English and the Chinese. Some other persons, nevertheless, were of opinion, that however invulnerable the heart of a Chinese at other times, there was at this holy season yet a portion of humanity found within it, sufficient to qualify its habitual ill-humour towards all people whatsoever for the time; so that, with the aid of the Russian superintendent at Kiachta, of which I was secure, through the introductions with which I was sure I should be furnished, and under cover of a Russian party, I might overcome all difficulties, and have the gratification of a peep at least into the little border town of the Celestial Empire.

As the moon was yet in her first quarter, and the sky as usual clear, and the temperature of the atmosphere at the moderate degree of 21 of frost, and the roads good, we set out with every prospect of accomplishing our journey with little difficulty, and in time to have a day or two's leisure before the day of the "full white moon," upon which, as it was that of the height of the festival, it was most desirable to enter the Chinese town.

The scenery upon the first stage of our journey was of the same character as that observed upon the opposite side of Irkoutsk. Rude hills of no great altitude, with scanty vegetation, consisting of stunted birch and dusky firs exaggerated to black by the contrast with the snow, every where prevailed; and we saw no signs of cultivation, until we arrived at the station and village of Pashkovskaia, thirty-three versts from Irkoutsk.

As we were rather early for the calculation we had made for passing the Lake Baikal, we determined to sup here at leisure. All that was to be obtained, however, in the house of the government station was a dish of cedar nuts, which are a favourite article of food with the peasants of Eastern Siberia. But we were well

provided with viands of our own, and we made a luxury of the nuts, in eating them by way of dessert. It was not the first time I had tasted this Siberian fruit. The good people of Irkoutsk of every class, albeit too well fed to make use of them as a proper article of food, often go about with their pockets full of them, and I had several times been presented with a handful, by visitors at my own house and elsewhere. It was the first time, however, that I saw them put as a dish upon the table, and may, therefore, be the proper occasion to make the mention of them that their importance in household economy, as well as an article of food in the country, seems to demand.

The Siberian cedar-nut is much smaller than that we call the Spanish nut, which is imported in such abundance among us. The shell is thin and crisp, and of a dark colour; but the kernel is soft, of an agreeable flavour, and a little darker in colour than that of the Spanish nut. But not only is this fruit of the desert at once a luxury and an article of common food with the peasants, but it yields, when pressed, also an excellent and very sweet oil, which is in general use, both for the same purpose for which we use the olive oil on the table and in the kitchen, and for lights, especially throughout these eastern districts of the country.

It was near midnight when we left Pashkovskaia; and although the moon was approaching her setting, it was almost as light as day; and we now observed as we proceeded, a sensible difference in the face of the country. The forest trees were here larger and thicker sown, with a greater proportion of birch; while here and there a pine was visible, that might have been recognised as of the same family, by the proud sovereign of the forest, even in Canada. We now, too, began to observe evidences of cultivation, which became more

frequent as we approached the immediate vicinity of Listvenishnava, the second station and village at which we changed horses upon our journey.

We were now not more than about five versts from the Lake Baikal. But as we had to make two stages upon the lake by its shores before we launched out upon the unsheltered and often tempestuous plain of its icy bosom, we remained here but a short time. Our reception at this place, however, I must mention, merely to show how necessary it is for the traveller to have every due protection in all parts of the country against the incivility and extortion of that class of the Russian *chinovnik*, against whom he has more need to keep a good guard than against any other kind of enemies whatsoever.

As I entered the station-room alone, I was greeted by the *smotritel*, or official in charge, with the well-known words "*Niet locharde*" (No horses), accompanied with well-acted expressions of regret, which I easily understood, but to which, however, I did not attempt to make any reply. The Swiss was not far off: and as he entered, I desired him in a peremptory tone, to inquire when we were likely to be despatched. And when he had done so: "Not until mid-day at the soonest, for there are no horses in the village," was the reply. "Present the *padarojnea*," I then said.

The *padarojnea* is a government order for horses which is granted the traveller at any of the larger towns from which he may happen to commence a journey; and, upon this being presented, the *smotritel* retired, without opening it, to his private room, to take, as is the custom, a copy of it, which is usually a labour of about half an hour. Within this ordinary document had been placed a circular letter addressed to all the post masters, and with which I had been furnished, in addition to my other letters, by the civil governor at Irkoutsk, for the governor-

general had not at this time arrived; and scarcely had sufficient time elapsed for this to have been read, when the same *chinovnik* entered, and, without a word of further parley upon the subject, desired to know when we would have the horses tackled. Thus, in spite of our reception, in less than a quarter of an hour from the time we alighted here, we were gliding again, by the light of the sinking moon, along our smooth way.

The fellow had been aware how necessary it was for us to arrive at the Baikal sufficiently early to take the ice in time to complete the passage of the lake by day; and he had told us what was not true, for the purpose of exacting money to work the miracle which the letter in the *padarojnea* accomplished gratis.

Our road was now along the banks of the Angara. This famous tributary of the Yenessei, is from this place to the great lake, open throughout the winter, by reason of the extreme rapidity with which its current flows; and it is on that account a remarkable object in the natural features of this part of the country. But as we saw nothing at present, save a dense mist arising from its running waters, I shall leave what might be further said concerning it, until we come to its banks again, along which we travelled by day on our return.

Half an hour from the last station brought us to the coast of the famous lake, of which I shall now endeavour to give such an account as the novelty of its character and its peculiar interest seem to demand, and the popular knowledge of it with passage across its frozen waters may permit.

The Lake Baikal forms an important geographical feature of the country in Siberia, and it may be said, also, in Asia. The centre of this vast sheet of inland water, lies in latitude 53 degrees North, and between the longitudes 104 and 111 East of Greenwich. Its greatest length from north-east to south-west, in which

direction it lies, is from 580 to 600 versts; but its breadth no where exceeds ninety or ninety-five versts: while the opposite coasts, near the centre at one point, approach each other within thirty-five versts. Its depth has been variously stated. Those who follow the reports of the inhabitants upon its coasts, contend that it has no bottom; and, moreover, notwitstanding that its waters are fresh, that it is connected with the ocean by a subterraneous channel. Others, again, state that its depth near the outlet by the Angara, is 800 fathoms, or more, as it is probable, than "plummet ever sounded." The most reasonable accounts, however, place it at twenty fathoms in some parts, and 150 in others, according to the distance from the land.

The climate of the coasts of the lake, owing to the elevation of the land, and of the surface also of the waters, is severe and variable throughout the year. The best Russian authorities place the level of the waters at about 1600 feet above that of the sea, and the summits of the mountains around, from 600 to 1000 feet above the surface of the lake. Thus, the short hot season, which usually commences at the epoch of the summer solstice, and terminates with the last days of August, is frequently interrupted by violent tempests, and cold winds, and sudden squalls, which render the navigation difficult and uncertain. The waters of the lake are extremely soft, and of a transparency most remarkable, even in their frozen state.

A hundred and seventy rivers from 600 sources fall into this great lake, the more considerable of which are the Angara, the Barganzinn, and the Selenga. Nevertheless, one river, the lower Angara, the sluices of which we have just passed by, forms the sole channel by which the united contents of all these rivers find their way to the ocean. The temperature of the water of the Baikal, as well as that of the streams that fall

nto it, is at all times extremely low. That of the streams is said not to exceed 4 degrees of heat, and that of the lake not more than 10 degrees during the hottest days of summer. And the Angara, as it flows by Irkoutsk, is never above the temperature of 7 degrees; while the waters of the Léna, the sources of which are in latitudes far north of those of many of the rivers that run into the lake, attain in summer, according to the exile from whom I received the chief part of this information, the temperature of 12 degrees, and are always, according to the actual observation of another informant, 2 degrees higher than those of the Angara. Yet, owing doubtless to the depth of the lake, and the agitation of its surface, it is not usually frozen over until more than a month after the most rapid streams of the country, except the Angara at the point above mentioned, are entirely closed. Nevertheless, the navigation, which does not commence before the epoch of the hot season above mentioned, closes, by reason of the prevalence of the tempestuous weather, about the middle of October, which may be two months before the lake is frozen.

The fish of the Baikal, notwithstanding the low temperature of the waters, are abundant and in considerable variety. Those most frequently taken are the *omullé*, which resembles the herring; the *sig*, which resembles, but is smaller than the sturgeon; the *askina*, the pike, the carp, the *lavaret*, and a white fish called the *tymain*. Besides these, there is a remarkable fish called *golomain* by the inhabitants. This fish seems to dwell in the depths of the lake, and escapes both the line and the net. It is only indeed seen, when thrown on shore during a violent tempest; and it can never be brought to table, and rarely even picked up, on account of its being of such a dissolvent nature, that the moment it is exposed to the sun, or to a very little of the action

of fire, it melts away, and leaves nothing but the larger of its bones remaining.

It is a remarkable fact, that the seal of the ocean is found in great abundance in the Baikal, since it is scarcely possible that such of these not very active amphibious animals as live in this lake, can frequent the sea, or ever make a visit to the briny deep at a distance of more than 2000 versts, and return against the current of one of the most rapid rivers in the world.

The aquatic birds which are found frequenting the Baikal, are the swan, the goose, the macrouse, and ducks in great numbers, and of great variety in kind.

The coasts of the lake present almost universally, high, rugged, and sterile mountains, composed for the most part of granite rock, at the base of which mica is every where found, besides limestone and gneiss. The traces of volcanic action are also recognised by the presence of basalt and *pyroxène*, which are found here in great abundance. Shocks of earthquakes are said, indeed, to be still felt throughout this vicinity; but I did not meet with any traveller or inhabitant of the country who had witnessed the phenomenon.

Scientific men have suggested several theories concerning the formation of this mighty sheet of water, which they suppose to have been during some great convulsion of nature. But there seem to be no other grounds for this opinion than those upon which rest all our impressions concerning natural phenomena, that carry us back to very remote periods in the geological history of our planet. Accounts, indeed, are given, of remarkable risings and sinkings of the waters at certain periods, which, if they be well founded, seem to prove that the volcanic action beneath, is still not entirely suspended. It is said, also, that the waters of the lake are frequently, and often violently, agitated during a

perfect calm. But as the waves are described as running on these occasions precisely like those which agitate the ocean during a tempest, perhaps this impression may be classed with others more certainly indebted to the superstitions which the lone country and the impressive face of nature, have produced upon the unenlightened inhabitants of its coasts. Hot springs, however, it is certain, are abundant in this vicinity. But perhaps there is no country in the smallest degree elevated where these are not found.

The conjecture above mentioned concerning the connection of the lake with the ocean by a subterranean passage, probably arose from the presence of the seals, and from the discovery of coral rock in the lake, which I believe is found no where else in fresh water. It does, however, seem impossible, that the quantity of water that falls into the lake by so many streams can be drawn off by the one single river and by evaporation. May we not say, then, that it is very possible that there is a narrow subterranean channel from the lake to the sea; for the surface of the lake being more than 2000 feet above the level of the sea, and the distance between the sea and the lake being about 1600 or 1700 versts, there could not be any reflux of the stream to affect the freshness of the waters of the lake?

Notwithstanding the severity of the climate, and the character of the coasts of the Baikal, the lower portions of the mountains towards the southern extremity are covered with forests of a variety of trees of at least the hardier tribes, among which are the birch, the aspen tree, and firs of different species. The cedar is even found here of 120 feet in height.

It is in the valleys, however, between the mountains, which are refreshed by so many torrents, that, in the words of my principal informant concerning all that regarded the lake, "*la vegetation deploie toutes ses*

*richesses et toute sa magnificence.*" Here the *peuplier baumier* attains a growth which enables the inhabitants upon the coast of the lake to take advantage of its size to form their canoes of a single log. The *Pyrus baccata*, or apple of Siberia, the *Prunus fruticosa*, *cerisier à grappes*, the *Rhododendron dauricum*, and a quantity of shrubs and *Spiræas* of different kinds, display also in summer, all the rich variety of their foliage and their flowers.

In the same vicinity, are found in great abundance the more fruitful and choice shrubs—the raspberry, the *cassis*, the *Ephedra*, or golden fruit, with the perfume of the ananas; also divers *vacciniums*, such as *V. Myrtillus* (*airelle cherniza*), *V. uliginosum* (*veinés goloubitza*), *V. Nitis-Idea*, *ponctuée*, *brousnixa* (bilberry), *V. Oxycoccus* (*canneberge kliouxva*, whortleberry), *la mure*, known by its taste and perfume. In fine, the lily, the *pivoine liris*, the *Astragalis*, the *Hemerocallis*, the *Potentilla*, the *Centauræa*, offer a variety of colours and perfumes that we may search for in vain in many countries favoured by a more genial climate.

Of the wild animals upon the shores of the Baikal, the bears are the most numerous. The wild boar is also found. This animal subsists, like the bear, upon berries during summer, and cedar nuts raked up from beneath the snow during the winter. There are also martens, *gobéline*, squirrels, roebuck, foxes, wolves, and the lynx and the elk.

Such are the natural features, and the animal and vegetable productions, of the great lake of Siberia and of its vicinity. It remains to make a few observations concerning the people that inhabit its romantic shores.

Wherever we meet with men in a rude or simple state of society, we seem to find the imagination more or less impressed with feelings which correspond to the nature of the country in which they dwell, and to the character

of the scenery which they contemplate. Where nature has laid out the land in a fertile and unvaried plain, the nomadic or pastoral race which inhabit it, under the influence of the monotonous scene, relieved only by the rising and setting of the sun, appear to be impressed with a calm and placid character, which we often discover by a tinge of melancholy that appears in their music, or poetry, or songs. The tribes, on the contrary, which dwell among the scenes where variety and grandeur prevail, struck with romantic impressions, and with their imaginations little subjected to restraint, give way to superstitions which partake more or less of the terrible, in proportion to the milder or severer character of their religion, which is probably exotic, and the only additional subject upon which the pliant faculty of the mind has been employed. The scenery of which we have been speaking, and its effects upon the Bouriats, the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, form no exception to the general rule; and many superstitions exist among them concerning the sacred character of the lake, to which they give the appellation of the Holy Sea; and they express their impressions in varied and heroic songs.

All the superstitions of this people, with which both my principal informant, and others with whom I conversed on the subject, were acquainted, are upon the side of terror. They consist, for the most part, of impressions of the presence of evil spirits, by which the storms which prevail upon the lake are excited and allayed, and of the impression before mentioned, that the lake has no bottom.

## CHAP. II.

### JOURNEY FROM IRKOUTSK TO THE BORDER TOWNS OF SIBERIA AND CHINA—*continued.*

Descent to the Lake Baikal. — Coasting Journey. — Night Spectacle. — Superstitions accounted for. — Passage of the Lake. — Smoothness of the Ice — Transparency. — Causes of the Character of the Ice. — Fine Horses for crossing the Lake. — Thickness of the Ice. — The Rays of the Sun on the Ice. — Arrival on the opposite Coast. — Effects of Solitude upon our Energies. — A district Town. — A small Town. — Detention. — Composition of the Population of the District. — Roskolniks. — Bouriats. — Journey on the River Selenginsk. — Rudeness of the Country. — Very little Snow on the Land. — Leave the River. — No Snow. — Cultivated Land. — Arrival at Troiskasavsk. — Policy of the Russians. — Comfortable Lodgings.

THE traveller does not take the ice in the first instance at a convenient point of the lake for its passage, and we had yet two stages, making together about forty-three versts, to accomplish, before we could arrive at the point at which we were to launch out upon the icy plain.

The moon had some time since disappeared, when we descended the gradual slope which conducted us to the lake; but such was the brilliancy of the stars, that we could plainly distinguish the tracts of *sani* that had passed before us, as well as the land along the rude shores on our left, as we proceeded unobstructed by any inequality in the way, in a northerly direction. Here dark firs, scantily set in the white covering that concealed the earth, figured the varied forms of the high

and rugged hills; while in our front, the line of the horizon was plainly marked, by the abrupt termination of the brilliant lights, which seemed to shine with the same brightness at the very edge of the frozen element, that they displayed throughout the whole expanse of the heavens. And on our right hand, the existence of distant land of unequal elevation, was as plainly indicated by the intercepted rays of the lower stars in that direction. The scene which we were thus enabled to contemplate, was one of thrilling interest. The superstitions connected with this noble sheet of water thus suspended by nature amidst her grander features, must cease to be matter of wonder to the traveller whose path lies across its icy plain.

We arrived before break of day at Kadilnai, the first of the two stations which we had to attain before crossing the lake, which is at the distance of thirty-three versts from that which we last left.

There was no village here; and as nothing detained us, we changed horses with all possible expedition, and reached Goloustnaia, at the distance of fifteen and a half versts further, about three hours before noon. Here we breakfasted at leisure, that we might afford time for the sun, which now shone brilliantly upon the sparkling ice, to do his utmost, at least before we might reach the opposite coast of the lake.

At about ten o'clock, we found the mercury, which had been frozen in our thermometer when we arrived here, already risen to 26 degrees. And it was calm, and the sun shone full in our faces when we took the ice at this hour, with every prospect of a favourable crossing. But woe to the traveller, that should trust the elements and the smooth surface of the frozen waters of the Baikal for even the term of five hours without every precaution with respect to the time of day, to clothing, and to cattle.

Our horses, however, were of the finest that the country afforded. The best that can be obtained are kept expressly for the passage of the lake; and those with which we launched upon its bosom were almost as well furred by nature, as ourselves were by robbing the beasts of the land. They had, indeed, nothing but themselves to carry. A single horse might have drawn a dozen *sani* laden like ours. The perfect smoothness of the ice was only qualified at intervals by a little snow, gathered about the rough edges of some cracks which had obstructed its course, as the winds swept it along the surface of the frozen element. The lake had evidently frozen over during a calm, which must indeed occur at all times. It has been before mentioned, that owing to the continual agitation of its surface, and to its great depth, which, it is well known, is unfavourable to the making of ice, on account of the cold upon the surface being modified by the higher temperature of the waters beneath, it is only with the extremest cold, and when this occurs, the atmosphere is commonly at rest, that the Baikal freezes.

The appearance of the ice was so remarkable, that we were more than once induced to alight from our *sani* to examine it more particularly. We found it every where so smooth that we could scarcely stand, and we could not walk a step upon it. It was so transparent, too, as to be sometimes indistinguishable from the liquid portion of the element beneath it. Only indeed, where the lesser cracks appeared without snow, could its thickness be so much as conjectured; and notwithstanding that we judged this to be about six feet, which is four feet less than it is usually said to be, it was impossible for us to look directly beneath our feet, without feeling as if we were standing upon the water in its liquid state. I had been accustomed to travel upon ice many years before this; but I never before trod upon

an invisible solid that covered the liquid element beneath it. We looked in vain, however, for fish, which, if they like to be near the surface of the water at this season, doubtless have an aversion to being trodden upon, which they might well have expected at our approach.

The weather continued calm, or the atmosphere was so slightly agitated that it caused us no inconvenience. But such was the effect of the rays of the dazzling sun upon the ice, that, although the bright orb was far on our right hand before we had made half our passage, we could scarcely perceive even the coast that we were approaching, when we were within a few versts of its banks. In exactly five hours, however, from the time we took the ice, we arrived at Possoloskaia, a small village situated upon a neck of low land, stretching out from the proper mountain bounds into the lake, and at the distance, by some accounts, of fifty-five versts, and by others of sixty versts from the opposite shores.

After a hasty meal at this place, we resumed our journey. A few fences about the village, rising above the snow, indicated more cultivation than the character of the country had led us to expect. But as we proceeded, gradually rising to higher ground, we had nothing to relieve the interminable view of snow, and fir trees very thinly sown.

Soon after dark we changed horses at Steppnaia, called by some Dvaretzkaia, twenty-five and a half versts from the village where we had landed. We changed again at the villages of Kabanskiai and Tarakanovskaia, twenty-four and a half versts each stage, with the same scenery prevailing.

At the latter of these villages, we met a strange instance, in the case of the *smotritels* at the station, of the effects of solitude upon the interest men take in the world beyond their daily walk. The two worthy

officials here were so ignorant of all that did not concern their immediate duty, that they were not able to inform us the distance from their station to any other, except the nearest on either side of them, and not even either that to Kiachta or that to Irkoutsk.

Soon after midnight, we changed our horses at the village of Kunskaia, and early in the morning at a station, where there was no village, called Polovennaia Lastam (which two words signify in the language of the country *half-way-station*), and two hours before noon we arrived at the little district town of Verchneoudinsk.

Verchneoudinsk has no other claim to the dignity of a town, than the consequence it receives from the residence of a *gorodnichii*, or district master of police, a post-master, and one or two other public servants of inferior importance. It is, however, admirably situated upon the River Selenga, at the point at which the *Uda* falls into that river. The Selenga, already mentioned as the most considerable of all the streams that fall into the Lake Baikal, after taking its rise far in the Mongol country within the Chinese territory, and receiving the waters of the streams that proceed from the great desert of Gobi, falls at length into the Baikal, and contributes the greatest share of the waters that more than indemnify the great lake for the loss of what is drawn off by the great tributary of the mighty Yenessei, the rapid and ever-flowing Angara.

The inconveniences of a small town to the traveller in Siberia have been noticed upon a former occasion. And with a good knowledge of these, somewhat dearly bought, we were not able to pretend that we were taken by surprise, when told here, that we could not have so much as momentary shelter, nor even a room to restore our circulation, and thaw a morsel of bread, while the horses which were to take us on were wanting.

"We have to send three versts — no horses are to be got nearer," said the consequential functionary, when he had read the circular which had served us so well before. "All haste," however he added, "shall be made. But in the mean time, it is necessary that you should find a lodging."

It was happily day; and, we had indeed not much difficulty in finding a tolerable accommodation, although the room into which we were put was strewed with sleepers, who, as we learned, were in part inhabitants of the town, who had been burnt out during the preceding night, and in part, the conductors of a caravan lately arrived from the border towns to which we were proceeding. We had the misfortune, however, as it proved to be, to ask for some fish, instead of being, as we ought to have been, content with our own travelling stores: for, although we soon received notice of the horses being ready, we could not afterwards get the *samovar*, or our bread, which was taken to a separate building to be thawed, upon any terms, before a fisherman had been engaged, a shelter upon the river erected, a hole cut through I know not how many feet of solid ice, and that a fish thought proper to bite, and time enough had elapsed to cook it.

We had not, in reality, ordered the fish to gratify our taste or satisfy our appetites, but merely that we might have something to pay for; nor did we give the order until, in answer to our inquiries, we had been told that fish was to be had that was already caught; nor should we have waited for it, if we could have obtained, or in any way have supplied, the want of our bread and the *samovar*. We could not, however, complain of its dearness, when it came, if the time sacrificed in waiting were not taken into account, which was about two of the brightest hours of the day, for we only paid for it a few copeks. But it was a *sig*, the dryest and most insipid

of the finny tribes of the country, and neither of us, after tasting it, felt disposed to make a meal upon it.

The country round Verchneoudinsk is said to have a population of about 60,000 inhabitants, consisting for the most part of Bouriats, who are the aborigines of the country, and of Russians, who are the descendants of *Roskolniks*, or dissenters of the several sects from the Russian orthodox church, who were sent to colonize this part of the country during the violence of the religious persecution in the reign of the Empress Catherine. Of the Bouriats, it will suffice at present to remark, that they have the reputation of possessing greater steadiness of character, and of being more successful in the cultivation of the land, than their fellow subjects of Russian descent in this part of the country. Nevertheless, these Russians, amidst their religious fervour or profound obstinacy, are more successful than those who have not this strong bound by which their labours are concentrated and directed. One sect among them is the same with that which it has been stated still exists in considerable numbers in the eastern districts of Russia Proper, who have no priests, properly so called, and the simple offices of whose religion are performed by the ancients of their villages. There are likewise among them some of that sect, also before mentioned, the accommodating members of which support the children that are not their own, under circumstances which any one who heard it upon less authority than that which was quoted when they were mentioned, might be well excused for discrediting.

After passing Verchneoudinsk, the winter road lies upon the River Selenga, the course of which we now followed, until the last station before our arrival at the place of our destination.

To the next change at Restchinovskaia, which is a mere post station upon the banks of the river at the

distance of twenty-six versts from Selenga, we had wild hilly scenery, with a very scanty sprinkling of scrubby firs. We changed again at two other mere stations by the river-side, called Netessovskaia and Arsentievskaia, thirty-three versts to each. During the whole of this distance, we observed that the land was less hilly than that by which we had hitherto passed, with little appearance of vegetation above the smallest firs, and none whatever of cultivation.

After twenty-six versts more, we arrived at Selenginsk, to which the residence of the several officials of a district, as in other cases, imparts the consequence of a town, without its solid elements.

We saw nothing of Selenginsk, however, at present, save the interior of a remote and dirty little winter station-hut by the river-side. But, as we were several days here when we were on our return journey, the opportunity will occur for as full a notice as it may seem to demand.

To the next station, Nomachonovskaia, thirty-five versts, we had wild and hilly scenery, with little appearance of vegetation. Opposite this point, the eye was a little relieved by the novel view of a low island of about a verst in length, and covered with small birches, but which more resembled reeds than trees of their species in our climate.

The same absence of vegetation, with low land, prevailed throughout our course to the next two stations, Boutinskaia and Oustkiachtinskaia, thirty-five versts each. At the latter of these, which is the last upon the journey, there is a small village; and here we quitted the river for the first time since leaving Verchneoudinsk.

We had observed but little snow upon the hills or the lower lands for the last fifty or sixty versts; and, upon arriving here, we found the ground entirely bare. But as very little at any time falls in this vicinity, the

inconvenience is provided for; and the traveller, with his relay, is at the same time given a wheeled *tarantass* to continue his journey.

Nothing can be more refreshing to the eye than the bare ground, even without a particle of herbage, after we have seen nothing for many months but the white carpet upon the earth, which has concealed all colour from the view save that of the dusky firs where they may happen to grow; and this, especially, when we know we are soon again to lose the sight of the earth for some months to come.

We were here, too, gratified by the view of more stubble land than I had seen any where in the autumn in Siberia, with the exception alone of the immediate vicinity of Ikaterinburg at the foot of the Ural Mountains. These cheerful evidences of industry did not however greet us along the remaining portion of the journey. The road was now sandy, and, from its hardness, it was evident that there had been moisture on the ground. Nothing, however, obstructed our progress; and we continued our accustomed pace until we arrived, soon after the close of the fifth day of our journey, at Troitskosavsk, twenty-four versts from the last station, and about 400 from the banks of the Baikal, and 550 from Irkoutsk.

At Troitskosavsk the traveller is still four versts from Kiachta. But it is the nearest approach he may make to the sacred bounds of the Celestial Empire at the hour at which we arrived. A Russian governor, the agents of the Russian merchants, and a few tradesmen and artisans, with a view to the maintenance of peace, are all the habitants that are, by treaty with the Chinese, allowed to live so near the bounds of their empire. The immediate reason why this arrangement is so rigorously carried out is, however, said to be rather the policy of Russia than the obligations of the treaty. Every pre-

aution possible is taken by the authorities to prevent the smallest disagreement arising between the two dissimilar races which inhabit either side of the boundary line; for a mere broil might occasion troubles, that would deprive the Russians of their tea, now become among them even a greater necessary of life than we have yet made the "Celestial" beverage.

I had brought with me two letters of introduction. One of these was from the civil governor of Irkoutsk, as before stated, to the governor or superintendent at Kiachta, and the other to Colonel Roskildahoff, the commandant of a detachment of the mining corps stationed at Troitskosavsk. I had also messages, even from Tomsk, to a foreign officer of the same corps, in case I should visit this place, and who had been represented to me as exactly the man that every traveller must desire above all things to meet—that is to say, a gentleman well-informed, polite, and communicative.

It was too late when we arrived here to admit of my making the acquaintance of either of these gentlemen, in time for us to receive any aid in obtaining a place to lodge. We, therefore, desired the *yemstchik* to drive us to the house he thought most likely to afford us shelter; and we were agreeably surprised, both by the facility with which he found quarters and the character of the accommodations we obtained. The house, we found, though not an hotel, was well worthy of that appellation; for, though it had no beds, which, indeed, we did not want, we obtained two rooms in it, in one of which there were two chairs and a table.

## CHAP. III.

### KIACHTA.

Troitskosavsk.—Aspect of the Town.—Application for leave to enter Kiachta.—The Commandant.—Disappointment at not meeting a Foreigner.—Drive on the River Bura.—Arrival at Kiachta.—Description of the Town.—Population.—Character of its Inhabitants.—Visit to the Governor.—A Russian Painter.—Desponding Friend.—Treaty between the Russians and Chinese concerning Stragglers.—Jealousy of the Russian Merchants.—Effects of commercial Jealousy.

TROITSKOSAVSK is seated upon the left bank of a narrow stream called the Bura, which falls into the River Selenga, and between two ranges of sterile hills. It is one of the most irregular, and straggling, and least attractive of the smaller towns of Siberia. Its population is about 4000 souls, composed chiefly of the race descended from the ancient exiles, with some Bouriats.

Early in the morning after our arrival here, I mounted to the ridge of the hills which rise from the right bank of the stream, in order to obtain such a view as might make a lasting impression of a town so remarkable, on account of its geographical position, as well as its commercial importance. Nothing could exceed the dreary character of the landscape from this point of view. It presented the nearest approach to a colourless scene of any prospect I have ever beheld, that comprised both natural objects and any considerable number of the dwellings of men. It seemed as if a few patches of snow in the valley and along the summits of the hills would have afforded an acceptable relief to the sullen

prospect around. The buildings of the town are all of wood, and unpainted, and old, and so near the colour of the ground, that they were hardly distinguishable at this distance of scarce half a verst. The eye, indeed, of the spectator from these heights may range over hill and dale from ten to fifteen versts, in every direction, without encountering any variation from the colour of the dusky earth, save one or two buildings which belong to, though they can scarcely be said to be a part of, the good town of Troitskosavsk. One of these, the custom house, is placed upon an elevation, on the opposite side of the river below the town, and the other is the principal church, which stands in the centre of a wide open space, which divides the town into two nearly equal parts. The green roofs and white walls indeed of these only serve to make the want of the chief feature in the beauty of every agreeable prospect the more remarkable.

My next step was to call upon the commandant Roskildahoff, to whom I had brought my letter of introduction, and from whom I had been led to expect very useful aid. But the day commenced with disappointment. The colonel, contrary to the information which I had received from the gentleman who had procured me the letter, spoke no language but his own; and thus our conversation, which was carried on through an interpreter, was not very profitable. But I was still more disappointed now to hear that the foreign gentleman above mentioned, to whom I also brought a letter, and of whom I had had still greater expectations, was at the mines, at a distance of many days' journey from Troitskosavsk. I now heard, also, that the same inconvenience which had curtailed my intercourse with the commandant would attend any lengthened communication with the Russian governor at Kiachta.

My next step was to obtain a permit from the chief of the customs, which was necessary, in order to enter the little Russian border town. The building where this was to be procured being at some distance, I did not go myself to obtain this; and my servant, when he returned with the order, informed me that he had been questioned and examined for some time, and that it was doubtful whether he would have succeeded in his object, had he not produced the letter which I brought with me to the chief at Kiachta, which I had given him to make use of in case of necessity. The sight only of the address, however, upon this, removed all difficulties.

We now procured a droshky from the landlord of the house in which we were lodged; and, descending to the river, the ice upon which was not smooth enough to give any inconvenience to a wheeled carriage, while it afforded the most level road, we set off at the usual pace for the proper outpost of the Russian empire.

After a drive of four versts, we ascended the bank of the river, which brought us immediately to the barrier of Kiachta.

This remarkable little town lies in a valley between the same two ranges of hills which confine the town of Troitskosavsk, and is built upon an inclined plain on the right bank of the stream. It is sufficiently uniform in its plan and construction. A wide square occupies a central position in relation to the portions of the town upon three of its sides, but touches the neutral ground between the two great empires on the fourth side. Its upper part is formed by a church, which is in the centre, and the palace of the Russian governor. Upon the lower side appear houses of an inferior grade, between which short streets conduct to the river. Upon the side at which we entered the square, which was opposite to that of the neutral ground, appeared the

better sort of the private houses and two short streets. But towards the Chinese frontier there is only a palisade which marks the bounds of the neutral ground, and at the lower end of which there is a gate and a guard-house. Beyond this frail defence, at the distance of half a verst, appeared the walls of the Chinese town, above which were seen rising two gaudy pagodas, and one or two gilded flag-staffs.

The proper town of Kiachta consists merely of the streets above mentioned. But there are also here large storehouses for the tea and other Chinese merchandise, which may arrive at a season when it cannot be conveniently forwarded to Russia. These are placed apart from the private buildings, in the rear of the church, beyond the upper part of the square.

The private houses of Kiachta probably do not exceed sixty or seventy in number; but, being generally inhabited by the agents of the merchants, many of them are painted, which gives to the place, upon the whole, an agreeable aspect. The population of Kiachta, I was informed, does not exceed 300 souls.

I had expected to find here a little Nijhni Novgorod. I was, therefore, surprised at the absence of all appearance of business amidst the mightiest commercial transactions, at the very place of exchange of the products of the two empires to the value annually of many millions of rubles. There was, indeed, rarely, at any of the several times that I came and spent a considerable part of the day here, a dozen men to be seen at the same time in the square or in the streets; and above half that appeared were usually Chinese, who might be seen at intervals crossing the square at a creeping pace, in parties of three or four, with their small pipes and tobacco bags in their hands, and unaccompanied by any Europeans.

Few of the Russian merchants reside either at

Troitskosavsk or Kiachta, the greater part of the business being done by agents, whose principals inhabit the larger towns of Siberia and Russia, and pay those who reside on the frontier the liberal commission of seven per cent. upon the gross sum of their transactions.

As soon as we were sufficiently familiar with the public square of Kiachta and its narrow precincts, we drove to the government-house, which had been pointed out to us by a party we met in the square, in order to wait upon the governor, Gospodin Peterkoff, to whom, as before mentioned, I had been kindly favoured with an introductory letter from the civil governor at Irkoutsk. We found his excellency at home, and full of good-will. But he was taken too much by surprise to know well what he could safely promise towards enabling me to accomplish the chief object of my journey, the entrance into the Chinese frontier town; and he spoke only in general terms. The interview, however, closed by his requesting me to return to Kiachta the next morning, by which time, he said, he should be able to determine upon the best means of serving me.

There was yet a day between the present and the greatest of the days of the grand festival of the "white moon;" so that I retired satisfied with this interview, and in fair expectation of being able to see the interior of the Chinese town of Maimatchin before returning to Irkoutsk.

My next step was to search for the residence of a painter, to whom I had been introduced while at Irkoutsk, and who was now here, and employed in the decoration of the church above mentioned, and, by especial privilege, allowed to remain at Kiachta. We found the painter at his domicile, occupied with the son of the governor playing a game of Chinese billiards. The worthy gentleman, as far as I had been able to

judge upon my acquaintance with him at Irkoutsk, was by no means the most communicative person in the world; yet, in the absence of the gentleman I had chiefly depended upon at Troitskosavsk, every little aid that might be obtained was worth some pains to secure; and I thought I might, at least with the immediate news of the place, receive a few hints from him that would be useful, should I obtain permission to enter Maimatchin. And although I have not in this instance to acknowledge the same amount of obligation that I owe to many Russians for services upon other occasions of difficulty, the information I did receive was of some use, and was proportionably valued.

The painter was already acquainted with my design of entering the Chinese town, concerning which I had conversed with him at Irkoutsk, and, as soon as mutual salutations had passed between us, he began, after the mode of those who look upon the dark side of every thing, to enumerate all the difficulties to be expected in the attempt, and all the consequences that might follow either success or failure.

I myself am one of those who believe, that when we have once deliberately entered upon any enterprise, whether important or trivial, it is unwise to think of difficulties or evils until they actually obstruct our path towards the object we have in view. They are often exaggerated by being contemplated at too great a distance, and they seldom increase in magnitude as they are approached.

The painter began his communications, by stating that a treaty existed between the Emperors of Russia and China, by which all the stragglers from the territories of either into those of the other were to be sent back, and delivered to the nearest authorities within the empire of the sovereign of whom they were the subjects. He then informed us, that several Russians,

since this treaty was made, had been caught within the Chinese territory, and put into cages, like parrots, and brought upon camels' backs from different distances to be surrendered to the authorities of Kiachta. And to this he added, that, as it was reported here that a fresh war had broken out between the English and the Chinese in the southern provinces of the empire, and that it was certain that I should not be mistaken for a Russian, my treatment probably might not be quite so mild.

"Nothing," said the painter, continuing his counsel in a more energetic strain than he had commenced, "can exceed the abhorrence or terror concealed under terms of contempt, which the Chinese entertain for your nation. They say that you dwell on sterile islands in the midst of the great ocean, and live by piracy and the plunder of every people who honestly cultivate the soil and pursue the arts of peace. They say, also, that for your success in your depredations, you have been more indebted to the cunning of the fox, which you eminently possess, than to the voracity of the wolf, which they fear less. Mark, then," he continued, "with what pleasant eyes an Englishman is likely to be regarded at Maimatchin."

Upon hearing all this, I reminded the painter of the sort of protection I must necessarily be under if I entered the Chinese town; and, as far at least as the caging went, I should at most have but half a verst to travel. The rest of his desponding discourse I thought scarcely seemed to call for any reply that might not appear to reflect upon the good Russian for his credulity.

"You are not, however, a merchant," said the painter, resuming his discourse, and in a manner that did not seem to imply any doubt.

"I certainly am not," I replied.

"Nor come to buy nor sell?"

"For neither. I have nothing whatever to sell; and I all certainly purchase nothing of the Chinese, unless should happen to see a lady's fan, or some such bagalle, that I might be tempted to bring away with me."

"Know then, notwithstanding," said the painter, that you have another difficulty to encounter. You ave the misfortune or the honour, as you may deem it, f having put every Russian merchant in this place ut of humour for some days past, on account of a report, f which you have been the occasion, that an Englishman vas on his way to make great purchases of Chinese nerchandise at this place."

This, indeed, when I remembered the reports at Nijhni Novgorod, I found it very easy to believe, and almost as much so, to calculate the amount of the damage done to the Russian merchants. The rule of proportion might have been sufficient. If three Englishmen could cause a certain amount of mischief at the great fair at Nijhni Novgorod, visited by 300,000 strangers, how much should one cause at a commercial depôt of about 300 inhabitants, and not lawfully visited by any strangers at all?

"You have seriously deranged the market," continued the painter, "and caused great perplexity among the merchants, perhaps even on both sides of the neutral ground. But the article most affected is the Chinese sugar, of which it is said the Englishman expected was to purchase the whole that is to be obtained. It has, in consequence, risen no less than 60 per cent."

Perhaps it is not strange that jealousy of any kind should, like other passions, be productive of some follies; yet it is very strange that it should induce men so shrewd as Russian merchants to think it worth an Englishman's while to travel so many thousand miles to purchase an article which is greatly inferior,

unless eaten as a sweetmeat, to the ordinary moist sugar, which they cannot but know we import from our colonies.

The Chinese sugar brought to Maimatchin, it may be here remarked, when eaten alone, so much resembles the maple sugar made in Canada, that, in spite of assurances from several who ought to have been correctly informed, that it is extracted from the cane, cultivated like that from which our sugar is obtained, I still believe it to be the reduced sap of some similar tree in China to that of the maple in Canada.

Notwithstanding the desponding thoughts of the painter, I became convinced before we left him that he was friendly to my wishes; for, upon my informing him of my intention to mount the highest ground about the vicinity, to obtain, if possible, at least a bird's eye view of the "Celestial town," in anticipation of the possibility of a disappointment in entering it, he strongly recommended me to take no such step, but to return immediately to Troitskosavsk, and communicate with as few persons as possible while awaiting the determination of the governor, who, he believed, notwithstanding his good-will, might think less favourably of my request to-morrow than to-day.

## CHAP. IV.

### KIACHTA—*continued.*

**Second Visit to Kiachta.—The Painter's News.—Jealousy of the Merchants overcome.—Causes.—My Servant's History.—His Speculations in Russia.—His Business in Siberia.—Inconveniences of carrying Merchandise in a *Sani.*—Causes of Change of Feeling among the Merchants.—Fire at Kiachta.—Conduct of the Chinese.—Their Superstitions.—Visit to the Governor.—My Servants.—All Obstacles overcome.—Inconvenience of having a Republican Servant.**

On the day after my first interviews with the governor and the painter, I drove at an early hour directly to the government-house at Kiachta. I was disappointed, however, in my expectations of seeing his excellency, who, we were informed, had entered Maimatchin, with a deputation of merchants, to express publicly his acknowledgments to the Chinese chief, for timely aid which the Russians had received from him in suppressing a fire that had a night or two before broken out in Kiachta, and threatened the destruction of the town. Upon hearing this, I proceeded to call again upon the painter, whom I found at home, and from whom I had the gratification to learn, that one at least of the difficulties that were thought to stand in the way of my entering Maimatchin, which was the jealousy of the Russian merchants, and which was probably the greatest, had disappeared.

I must report the circumstances which led to this change, as they were related to me by the painter. But it is necessary, previously, to say a few more words concerning the character of my interpreter and servant, who had quite unconsciously a considerable share in

bringing about the fortunate change of feeling among the merchants.

The worthy Swiss was by birth and upon principle, a republican. He had left his home, like many others, in the full expectation of returning as rich as gold, as in knowledge of the world; but, like the majority of adventurers, in at least the former of these expectations, he had experienced nothing but disappointments. After travelling through Germany, and following his business in several of the towns with indifferent success, he at length entered Russia, and arrived at Moscow, where he opened a little shop, and sold hams, tongues, sausages, portable soups, and other similar articles. Many, however, of these were new to the Muscovites, and they did not deal with him liberally enough to produce the profits he had calculated upon, which he attributed to the fondness of the Russians for tobacco, brandy, champagne, and tea against the use of all which luxuries he was a stern advocate, without, as it not always happens in parallel cases, being himself addicted to the same or worse indulgences than those he condemned. When he was well assured of the inutility of a longer stay in the central capital of Russia, he set out for Kazan, in which city he had been informed his business would at least have all the advantage of novelty. He commenced here, indeed, very well, as he had usually done in his speculations; and his business was daily augmenting, when some badly disposed persons spread a report among the Mussulmans, who had become the greatest of his customers, that his sausages, which were a prime article of his trade, were partly made of pork, notwithstanding his assurances, for the truth of which, he told me, he had offered them the evidence of their own senses, that they were wholly made of beef. His speculation, indeed, at Kazan had been among the most

unfortunate that he had made; for he had been literally driven out of the town by the cries of the Tatars for his expulsion.

After this, he resided for some time in one of the Russian villages; and he was about to return to his native hills, when he accidentally met some travellers from beyond the Ural Mountains, who assured him very confidently that Siberia was the field for the exercise of his skill in this novel mode to the inhabitants of that country of preparing food. For Siberia, therefore, he now determined to set out; but upon passing the mountains, his fortunes did not much mend; and, after wandering for four years through the western districts of the country, he came to Irkoutsk, where I found him, thoroughly tired of Siberia, and ready to embrace the first opportunity that might offer, to quit a country where, as he declared, nothing was thought worth purchasing but such supposed luxuries as were every where corrupting the manners and morals of the Russian people.

While making his arrangements to accompany me on this journey, he requested of me that he might be permitted to take with him any articles that should remain unsold at the breaking up of his establishment, to which I readily assented. It is the custom in travelling in Siberia, when you have but little luggage besides beds, which are always necessary, to fill up the vehicle, of whatever character it may be, with hay or straw. Now, although we had made less provision for this journey, and carried less than usual, I very soon found after our quitting Irkoutsk that the beds were much higher than they had been upon the journey from Krasnoyarsk to Irkoutsk. This might have been a matter of indifference, had we intended to travel only by day; but as I had made up my mind to take a nap during the early part of the night, I had given orders at the first station at which we stopped that the beds should be suitably dis-

posed, and this appeared to me upon my entering the *sani* to have been done. It was impossible to sleep, however. The road seemed more uneven than usual; and the beds rolled about as if they were resting upon loose stones. In a word, this led to my discovering that we were carrying a brave freight of large sausages, all of course frozen as hard as rocks. The circumstance was a great trouble at the time, and indeed during the whole of the journey; but we shall now see how amply this was compensated.

My discouraging, but honest friend, the painter, thus related the circumstances which had brought about the fortunate change of opinion among the merchants. "It was the most fortunate thing possible," said he, "that you brought a cargo of so useful an article as that which your servant disposed of yesterday in the town. The sausages have turned all your enemies to friends. Not an hour had passed yesterday after you left Kiachta before the terror of the merchants began to be dissipated by the report, that their suspected rival and supposed English millionnaire had proved to be only a sausage merchant. Some at first doubted the report. But all is now right. The load came this morning from Troitskosavsk to our apothecary, who is the purchaser of the whole for the benefit of the sick; and he has thawed and exhibited already certain samples that have confirmed the news and overcome all narrow suspicions and prejudices whatsoever. Thus, none of the commercial men will throw any more difficulties in the way of your entering Maimatchin."

"But," said the painter, in conclusion: "don't let any ill-timed pride on your part open the eyes of any one of the merchants, though you must explain the matter to the governor. His excellency will scarcely like to conduct a sausage merchant to the presence of the representative of his Celestial Majesty."

In addition to this news I received several other little pieces of information from the painter concerning his Chinese neighbours, of which, however, for the present, I shall report only such as may not seem to modify the favourable impressions which two visits that I subsequently made to Maimatchin were calculated to produce, reserving such as seem to show great inconsistences in the Chinese character, until we shall have reversed the picture which this curious little town exhibits.

The painter informed me, that a day or two before we arrived at Kiachta, the fire above mentioned broke out, and threatened the destruction of the whole town, and that it was extinguished by the activity of the inhabitants with the aid of the Chinese of Maimatchin, though not before a dreadful loss of life had taken place, and several houses had been destroyed.

The circumstances concerning this fire were as follows. The house at which it broke out was inhabited by a merchant and his wife, who were known to be a tenderly attached couple, with seven children. The merchant was from home when the fire broke out. The flames suddenly burst forth at the door, and catching the staircase which led to the rooms that were inhabited by the mother and children, and a female servant, cut off their retreat, so that they all perished together in the flames.

The fire spread with its accustomed rapidity whenever it breaks out in the Russian or Siberian towns, owing to the state of the wood of which the houses are built, which is so dried by the great heat kept within through the winter, and by the sun of summer, that were it not for the vacant space left between the buildings by the Russian style of forming the streets, scarce a village or town save the two capitals, where less inflammable materials are generally used for building, could survive twelve months. On this occasion it ran

along the pailings between the houses, feeding upon the wood in the yards, and was resisting all the efforts of the inhabitants to stay its course with all the water they could obtain, when suddenly a detachment of the people of Maimatchin, arrived with a train of camels laden with water in such quantities that the Russians were by this timely aid enabled to arrest the ravages of the destructive element, and preserve their town.

Loss of life and property from the effects of fire in Siberia, are among the more frequent of the calamities which the people experience. But it was the particular circumstances under which the Chinese gave their aid in this instance that render this fire remarkable, and call for the notice which is willingly prefixed to the little account of Maimatchin and its inhabitants which will follow.

The Chinese, we must first mention, are restrained by their religion from extinguishing the flames of any fire whatever. In Maimatchin, which is built of unburnt bricks and mud, with some mixture of wood, fires, though not so frequent as in the rival Russian town, nor so destructive when they occur, nevertheless sometimes surprise the inhabitants, who have on more than one occasion owed the preservation of their town to the voluntary and timely interposition of the inhabitants of Kiachta. When the flames have broken out, the pious Chinese have stood gazing with stupid awe at the ravages of the devouring element, while the Russians have generously rushed to their aid and extinguished them.

It is fortunate, however, that superstition, like other weaknesses of our nature, has its goal, lest we might, under the influence of such a powerful enemy of the faculty which determines our rank in the creation, degenerate to the nature which some philosophers think was the original condition of our race, and swim again like

fishes, or browse in the woods like wild beasts. There is always some saving point to screen us from the full consequences of its excess. A faint gleam of light seems to flash at intervals amidst the profoundest darkness, as if no part of our species were ever to be left entirely abandoned to the influence of impressions that have confounded their nobler reason, and already sufficiently degraded their nature. Thus, the very manner in which the Chinese in their turn rendered the generous service to the inhabitants of Kiachta in the hour of their need, while it will show us the existence and the force of the great enemy of truth to which may be attributed so many of the deplorable passages in the history of our race, is most agreeable to contemplate, as affording an instance of at least the partial triumph of reason over the very grossest of existing superstitions. The inhabitants of Maimatchin brought the water to extinguish the fire; yet the salvation of their own empire, or their own individual property, would not have induced them to throw a drop of it upon the flames, and after the water was delivered they stood gazing with the same awe or indifference at the Russian fire, that they were accustomed to gaze upon the fires in their own town.

But that which perhaps exhibits in the strongest light the character of the struggle in the Chinese breast, and the reality of their impressions, and which shows the most clearly the amount of the triumph of truth over error, is, that upon the morning after the fire, the chief and all that had aided in the charitable work of the preceding day, assembled in their temple to make a propitiatory offering for the sin of which they deemed themselves to be guilty.

While I was in conversation with the painter, the governor, and the deputation that had accompanied him, which may be said to have represented the commercial

interest of the Russian empire, returned from their complimentary visit to the Chief of Maimatchin. The Chinese were reported by one of the merchants who came immediately to the painter's with the news, as in high good humour at the warm acknowledgments which they had received for their friendly services upon the evening of the fire, and the painter now coupling what he heard with the happy circumstance of yesterday in my favour, was quite confirmed in his opinion, that no obstacle would be offered to my passing the gate of one empire, and entering that of the other, even that very day, in case I should desire it. Thus, well satisfied with this interview, I left my new friend, and proceeded with my interpreter to make another visit to Governor Peterkoff.

I have not mentioned, that I had been much annoyed upon my previous visit to the government-house, by the extreme familiarity of my republican servant with the Russian governor, which it was difficult for me to restrain. Upon the present occasion, however, I had given strict injunctions to the Swiss, that he was on no account to shake hands as he had done before, with his excellency, or make any advance towards such familiarity as he had shown upon the preceding day. The governor, however, whether from his having heard of the happy change in the feelings of the merchants by the cessation of their jealousy, or from any other cause, was ten times more warm and friendly than he had been before; and taking the Swiss by the hand, after he had paid me this compliment, he told him at once that there was no obstacle to our passing the barrier that very morning; and that, if we were ready to go, we should be accompanied by his interpreter, with whom the Chinese were well acquainted; and, moreover, that on the morrow I should accompany himself upon a visit which he had to make to the Chinese town of a different

kind from that of to-day, and have the distinguished honour of dining with the Chief of Maimatchin upon the principal day of the great festival of the "White Moon."

Not that all this, at the time it was spoken, was intelligible to me. The governor, indeed, had addressed himself rather to my interpreter than to myself; and the Swiss, who had caught my strong desire to accomplish the object for which we had come so far, upon the governor's concluding his communication, now seized his excellency's right hand with both his own, and pressing it to his bosom, began a discourse that I was obliged to stop, by reminding him that I was myself not yet acquainted with much more than I could guess of what had passed, and that I was waiting in suspense to know the rest.

The Swiss now communicated all that the governor had said; and as soon as I heard his excellency's determination in full, I thanked him heartily myself also, but without quite so strong outward signs of warmth as those with which my interpreter had favoured him.

We now left the government-house, accompanied by the aid above mentioned, and bent our steps towards the Russian gate, leading to the neutral ground.

## CHAP. V.

### KIACHTA.—MAIMATCHIN.

Origin of the Border Towns.—Relations between Russia and China.—Wars.—Russian Settlements on the River Amour.—Conquests of the Chinese.—Negotiations.—Treaty between the Russians and Chinese.—Russians lose an important Territory—Moral Results of the Treaty.—Russian Church at Pekin.—Russian Students of the Chinese Tongue.—Character of the Traveller's Visit to Maimatchin.—Neutral Ground.—Gate of the Town.—Mixed Language.—The Border Towns.—Characteristics of the two People.—First Impressions of Maimatchin.—Decorations of the Streets.—Character of the Streets—Dogs.—Desert beyond the Walls.—Chinese Caravan of Tea—The Mongols.—The Grand Quarter of the Town.—Pagoda—Sculpture.—Temples.—Monstrous Gods.—Idolatrous Worship.—Confucius.—Dresses of the Gods.—Another Chamber of Gods.—Decorations.—Lamps consecrated.—Artificial Vegetation.—Seat of Justice.—No Current Coin.—The lesser Streets.—The Canals of the Chinese.—Meanness of the Houses in the Poor Quarters.—Return to Kiachta.

BEFORE we find ourselves within the walls of the little Chinese border town, it will be well to make a brief reference to the events which led to the present relations between the great states that here encounter, and which gave to the towns of Kiachta and Maimatchin the importance they at present enjoy.

After the acquisition of Siberia, the Russians pushed their conquests beyond even the present boundary of their empire; and near the middle of the seventeenth century, they established themselves upon the great River Amour. This important river, after taking its rise at no great distance eastward of the spot upon which

we now stand, by the serpentine course of its main stream, and by its innumerable tributaries, waters the country for about 5 degrees further towards the south, and ultimately falls into the Sea of Ochotsk, still within the Chinese territory, about 3 degrees north of the present boundary line of the two empires upon the meridian of these border towns. This whole territory is of incalculable value, on account of the Amour being the most northern of all the rivers of Asia which communicate with the Pacific Ocean, and are of sufficient magnitude to be of any consideration in either a political or commercial point of view. The Russians, at the time of their conquest, appear to have been sensible of the importance of the acquisition, and they erected several fortresses, the more important of which were those of Albasin and Kamarski. They were scarcely, however, established in these, before the Chinese, with a strong force under Camhi their general, entered the same territory, with the intention of appropriating the fine watered country which it comprises. Thus the forces of the two great empires found themselves in the presence of one another, and hostilities commenced between them in the year 1680.

The Chinese first began their operations against the Russians, by laying siege to Kamarski; and though repulsed, they found means to harass their enemies and to cut off parties, whom they made prisoners, which put a stop to the operations of the Russians in their efforts to settle the country.

This state of the relations between the two empires caused the Czar, Alexy Michaelovitch, to send an embassy to Pekin; but from which, however, no result ensued, and the Chinese, now with augmented forces, attacked Albasin, and compelled the garrison to capitulate, and the Russians to cede their conquests. After this, they totally demolished all the settlements of the

Russians, and retiring, carried back with them a great portion of the inhabitants prisoners.

Soon after this, the Russians advanced again, with a force of 1600 men, and repossessed themselves of the country which they had lost, and constructed a new fort. The Chinese were no sooner apprised, however, of the return of their rivals, than they re-entered the country with a force of 7000 men and a large train of artillery. But after laying siege to Albasin, and battering the walls of the town for several weeks, they were not able to make any impression. In the meantime, famine and disease had nearly obliged the besieged again to yield, when the Chinese being apprised of a negotiation entered into by the courts at Moscow and Pekin, abandoned their enterprise and withdrew their army.

The Russians had sent an army into this part of their conquered territories about two years before this time, in 1685, but which did not reach Selenginsk, the last district town of Siberia towards the Chinese boundary, until 1687, where they remained inactive, for what cause is not stated.

Several events, however, together with the Chinese policy, delayed the settlement of affairs until 1689, when the Chinese boldly marched northwards as far as Nertchinsk, where they dictated to Golovin, the Russian commander, their own terms.

The treaty now made, was concluded in the reign of Ivan and Peter Alexievitch, in the year 1689, and is remarkable on two important accounts. By the terms of it, the Russians lost all that tract of country, and that great river by which it is fertilised, the value of which they seem to have forgotten, or did not regard. But at the same time, it laid the foundation for that important commercial intercourse which exists between the two great empires at this day.

Subsequent to these events, many minor misunderstandings at different times arose between the two nations, proceeding from the irregular and illicit commerce carried on by the merchants of the respective countries. In the year 1728, however, a treaty was concluded by the ambassadors on both sides, and signed on the spot upon which Kiachta now stands, which is still the basis by which all the commercial transactions between the two nations are carried on.

There was another result, however, of this treaty, which, though in a commercial or national sense, not of so much importance, has a moral interest well worthy of notice. It has been a step at least towards acquiring a better knowledge than we at present possess of the Chinese institutions, about which so much interest has been ever felt, and the true spirit of which such a thick veil still conceals. It appears that the Russians who were taken prisoners during the wars above mentioned, were at the time of the treaty of Nertchinsk, so satisfied with the treatment they had received from the Chinese at Pekin, to which city they had been carried, that they refused to avail themselves of a provision in the terms of this treaty, which allowed them to return to their country. A Russian church was even allowed to be built for their use; and a street was especially appropriated for their residence, and called after the name of their country. Moreover, by the above-mentioned treaty, in addition to these privileges, the Russian government was allowed to send youths to China, for the purpose of acquiring the Chinese tongue, from which have at least resulted some interesting translations from Chinese works by Gospodin Leontieff, who resided ten years at Pekin. The world, however, cannot compliment the Russians upon their progress in this way, or on account of any valuable information they have hitherto obtained. The people

Russians, and [illegible] of Europe with such portion of the [illegible] been able to make but slow

Soon after [illegible] Chinese.

force [illegible] of the prisoners above mentioned coun[illegible] intermarried with the women of their adopted for[illegible] country, and are, for the most part, now so perfectly naturalised as even to have embraced the religion, as well as the language, of the Chinese. A church, however, still exists within the walls of the Russian caravansary at Pekin, and Russian priests, who are exchanged every ten years, still reside, and perform the offices of their religion in the Chinese capital.

Since the treaty of Nertchinsk, the border town which we are about to enter, has been the Chinese depôt for the merchandise which is exchanged between the two empires, precisely in the same manner that Kiachta is the depôt of the Russians. It contains, at this time, a male population exclusively, amounting to about 1200 souls, and has about 200 houses.

I have hitherto almost spoken of the little enterprise before us, as if we had been about to pass the barriers of the Celestial Empire for some object that was worthy of martyrdom to attain. My enthusiasm, I confess, however, has never any where been of that character which might beget even a desire to see any institutions, political or religious, such as martyrs have given up their lives to reform, in the slightest degree shaken, before it might be certain, that in proportion as prevailing errors were eradicated, truth and civilised government and not new errors alone, as often happens, would establish themselves.

I shall now endeavour to describe what we saw in the little Chinese town, in regarding the place rather as a curiosity, than in its more important relations. Nevertheless, what fell under our observation during this and a subsequent visit to Maimatchin, may afford interest,

sample of the character of the ordinary inter-
se between men who seem to have scarce a thought
dea in common, save only such as regard some few
al truths which are impressed upon every rational
abitant of the earth.

Along all the boundary line of the two extensive em-
es between which we now stand, the sole gate of
mmunication and lawful commerce, is that which
are about to pass, in order to see all that a stranger
ght be permitted of an isolated sample of the people
t swarm throughout the rich and vast country that
s within the famous wall which marks their more
per territory.

A piece of neutral ground of about half a verst in
eadth, separates the two dissimilar towns, and the two
ssimilar empires. At the Russian gate which leads
the neutral ground, there is a guard-house, at which
e found sentinels on duty; but, as the governor's
terpreter was with us, we passed this barrier without
eeting any obstruction.

In crossing the neutral ground, there was nothing to
e seen of the Chinese town, on account of the height of
e walls which surround it, in proportion to the buildings
ithin, save the two pagodas before mentioned and the
ilded flag-staffs, and the colours which were flying.

As we approached the town, we observed a screen set
t eight or ten paces from the gate, covering the
ntrance, and constructed of the same materials as the
walls, which are of mud and unburnt bricks, and from
which it had not been distinguishable at a distance.
As we passed round this screen, to enter the gate, we
naturally looked for a guard-house and soldiers, or at least
for a sentinel; but there was neither the one nor the
other, nor any one armed or capable of resisting a child.
A drowsy old man, a fit emblem of the institutions of
his country, sat upon a low mud bench against the

inside of the screen, and immediately opposite the gate. He saluted our guide good humouredly as we appeared; and we now passed the gate, and stood in the principal street of Maimatchin, and the reality of long expectation was before us—the curiosity we had come so far to behold. The gate of the vast slumbering empire had turned upon its harsh hinges to admit the strangers, and we were, at least, in the Celestial dominions.

There is not a Russian or Siberian in Kiachta who speaks the Chinese language, nor a Chinese in Maimatchin who knows more than a few words of the Russian. Necessity, however, has been true to the terms of the adage, and begotten an intelligible tongue, composed chiefly of the Mongolian, by which the merchants of the two empires transact all their affairs. But even with this, our guide had but an indifferent acquaintance; so that we were not very confident concerning the advantages under which we should see the chief objects of interest which we were about to inspect.

The two border towns of Russia and China in every light they may be seen, are highly characteristic of the spirit of the people of the great empires to which they severally belong. North of the great line of demarcation, every thing wears the appearance of youth, and rapid growth, and advancement towards the superior degrees of excellence which we trust that the people of the Russian empire are destined to attain. But we no sooner pass the threshold of the gate of the empire of the peculiar people whom we are now among, than the figure of age and social decrepitude stands before us; and, were we not aware of the prevalence of a state of morals throughout the land that shocks every better principle that we have imbibed, the type now exhibited of Time's withering hand, might at least command our sympathy.

We thought it rather a disadvantage to us, that we saw the town in its holiday attire. The first view, however, of its streets as they presented themselves to us, in spite of the decorations which appeared in them, slightly reminded me of the disinterred ways of Pompeii. The gay dress of the principal street consisted of numberless coloured lamps and flags hanging upon strings across from the roofs of the houses on either side, from one end of the street to the other. The lamps were small, and some made of talc, and some of paper painted and figured. The flags were of gay colours and small, the greater part being mere slips, like short pendants. But the effect intended was spoiled by their numbers, just as it happens with one of our ships upon a gala day, by the abundance of her flags displayed, which gives her more the appearance of a laundress' red and blue shirt-drying yard, than the "thing of life" which no such tawdry ornaments can make more animate, or in any way adorn.

This chief street is narrow, certainly not above ten paces in breadth, and unpaved. The houses are built of unburnt bricks and mud and wood, and are of only one story, and windowless upon the sides which front the streets. As we walked slowly on, we observed gateways at nearly equal intervals, opening upon courts, in each of which there were several doors leading to independent apartments in the same house, which generally formed the whole court. The courts were decorated with flags and lamps in the same manner as the streets. The windows within the courts were generally large; and talc, or paper painted or stained, supplied the place of glass. The appearance altogether of some of these houses, was, indeed, more like that of a child's nursery toy, representing a fine building, than any thing real I had seen before. They were,

however, the dwellings of the richer class of the merchants of the place.

The chief street appeared to be about half a verst in length; but it was not wholly composed of these houses with courts. Towards the opposite extremity to that at which we entered, we found it lose this character, and consist of mean, windowless houses, presenting nothing of the neatness and propriety of the rest.

From one end of this street to the other, as we passed along, we saw but one human being, whose appearance, together with the silence of the streets, contrasted strangely with the gaiety of the decorations. This Chinese was standing as motionless as a statue, by the entrance to one of the courts, with a small pipe and a tobacco bag in his hand, and looking as if he were half asleep.

But although we saw but one biped inhabitant in the principal street, we did not reach the end of it without experiencing some of the inconvenience which the traveller in all parts of Siberia will become familiar with, from the dogs. The people of Maimatchin appear to have fewer dogs than the Siberians generally, and most of those they keep are of a smaller breed than those of their neighbours. Their dogs, however, are extremely vicious; and it is necessary that the stranger should be constantly on his guard against them. Our guide had been before bitten, and he had on this occasion furnished us with sticks to defend ourselves, even before we entered the town. And now when we came to the end of the street, and attempted to pass the gate which led to the open country, our passage was opposed by three or four dogs of a larger kind than those we had seen within, and the fiercest that I remember having ever encountered. Our sticks we found insufficient to keep them at bay. One of the more furious, to whom I had given a blow, after crushing the stick with his teeth,

tore my *schouba.* Thus, we were now actually engaged in a complete battle with these dogs, and in the presence of two Mongols, who were sitting upon the rail of a bridge that passed across a ditch or brook that skirted the wall of the town upon this side, and to whom the dogs doubtless belonged, but who did not condescend to use even their voices in our favour. I never felt more the want of a pistol in my hand, but it is a dangerous weapon for a traveller to carry in the streets of a town among a people whose laws, and customs, and language, are alike unknown to him; and happily we managed to vanquish our canine foes with the weapons which we carried.

When we were beyond the gate, the building of a great tea depôt at the distance of half a verst, formed the only object of relief to the eye fixed upon the dark waste surface of the sterile and snowless ground around. It is a low building, and appeared not unlike the *gostinnoi dvor* of the Russians in some of their smaller towns. I wished to visit it, but the guide, whether influenced by his fear of the dogs or of the Chinese, declared this to be forbidden; adding, that he had received strict orders from Governor Peterkoff before leaving the palace, to be especially careful not to go a dozen paces beyond the walls of the town on this side.

There seemed to be about 300 or 400 camels, standing and lying, and loaded and unloaded, near the building; and we heard that this was the second detachment of a caravan from Pekin of 2000 of these beasts, all laden with tea, and that it had just arrived. But the scene was not here wholly Chinese. The men that had conducted the caravan, and were now engaged in unloading the beasts and storing the merchandise, were all Mongols. As far as might be judged from the few we saw of this ancient people in their own land, we recognised the traits of a finer and far more active

race than the Chinese. Their costume at this season nearly resembled that of the Bouriats within the Russian province, who are in effect a tribe of Mongolian origin. They wore large fur caps, and *schoubas* of sheep or deer skin, girdled with a scarf at the waist, after the manner of the Russian peasants. And they wore their hair plaited, and in two tails hanging down to their girdles.

After again entering the gate, and turning upon our right hand at about a 100 paces from the wall, we came to the grand quarter of Maimatchin. A broader but shorter street than that which had conducted us from one end of the town to the other, here lies at right angles with the main street, and terminates with a temple and pagoda. Before, however, we reached the well-known and thoroughly national edifice, we found the houses fall back upon both sides, and form a square, or open place, sufficiently large for at least a spare display of Chinese art. Upon our left hand, stood a fantastic building like the ground story of a pagoda, and a little in advance of this, a sample of Chinese sculpture. Two beasts finely gilded, which were certainly intended to represent either lions or leepards, though we were not quite sure which of these animals they most resembled, here sat upon two pedestals about eight feet from the ground. And in the middle of the square, and opposite to these specimens of art, two gilded poles displayed the national colours. This square, however, is only the front of a series of courts and edifices, of which it is necessary to give a more particular notice.

Upon either side of the chief edifice here, there is a narrow gateway leading to the more remarkable places in the town. After passing one of these, and making our way across a court and through a second gateway, we found ourselves in the midst of a fresh exhibition of flags, and of lamps in abundance, and presently, to our

surprise, in the centre of a theatre, consisting of an open circular building of about thirty paces in diameter, and decorated in the same manner as the streets of the town.

From the theatre, in which we did not at present remain to examine any thing in detail, we passed through a passage directly opposite the stage, to a square space, with the same description of houses upon either side as those we had seen around the courts in the main street, and which now brought us to the chief pagoda and temple of Chinese worship at Maimatchin.

The temple appeared to consist of several courts and edifices, both open and close, with some regard to unity of design. A priest, or some official of the sacerdotal order, who was seated upon one of the steps in front of the most conspicuous portion of the building, recognised our guide as we approached, and rose and introduced us, without any ceremony, into the presence of a brave group of deities, whose colossal frames and hideous faces were quite enough to characterise the religion of the people as one of the many by which men are frightened into subservience and blind obedience to the will of a cunning and usually debauched priesthood. There are five of these worthy evidences of the facility with which men may be terrified into respecting and believing the most ridiculous things to be superhuman, by the devices of deceivers interested in crushing every thing that leads to the promulgation of truth and knowledge. The most frightful of the monstrous idols represents the Supreme God of a large portion of the Chinese idolators, as well as of the Mantchous and Mongols. He is seated in a niche between two columns and supported by two youthful female figures, and appears in the act of reading a tablet. This grim fellow is called by the Chinese *Looyee*, and by the Mongols, *Ghussur Khan*, and by the Mantchous, *Guanloë*. His

face is of burnished gold, and his hair, which is black, hangs across his yellow cheeks and mingles with his beard.

He wears a crown on his head, and he was now dressed in rich robes of silk. On either side of this pattern of idols and of gods of terror, are seated two other deities of inferior celebrity and power. Also within an enclosure in front of *Looyee*, there are four more of the brave tribe, that might rival the supreme among them in the hideousness of their features. These have a more warlike aspect, and appear habited in full armour, and carry offensive weapons.

The stranger might hope to find in some of these, at least some faint indications of the degree of refinement attained by the classes of the Chinese people of which he cannot suppose the inhabitants of Maimatchin to be a very fair sample—something to hang a conjecture upon concerning the state of the arts generally at Pekin. Within any temple in which men bow the knee and adore even the molten image, we are accustomed, and might expect, to find some symbol of supposed divine things, sufficiently well conceived and executed to excite a little sympathy or respect from all who enter therein. Had there been the smallest trace of benevolence, or of any one of the human passions that touch our affections, upon the features of the face of one single deity among those which seemed to be adored by a numerous section of people, we might have hoped that a way was open for the introduction among them, at some favourable epoch, of at least the purer system taught by their great philosopher. It is true, that all or a great portion of the higher and the learned classes of the Chinese profess the well-known doctrines of Confucius; but the most perfect indifference seems to prevail among them concerning the religion of the masses of their countrymen. There was

certainly nothing here to indicate that a particle of the spirit of the system of the great moralist had ever entered into the composition of the Chinese mind. The most positive ugliness that the human countenance could exhibit, with the expression of the passion of anger to the degree calculated to excite the greatest terror, were the only characteristics that might be discovered in all the deities that were represented.

The priests of the idolatrous religions among the most primitive people, whether their deities were of brass or of wood, seem never to have risked the reputation of their spiritual hierarchy, by the presentation of the image of one passion alone. Nevertheless, some among the Chinese, whose priests in general are perhaps the best schooled in deception of any of the order, have shown us the proofs, in trusting to the image of anger alone, how much more we are by nature given to the fear than to the love, of all spiritual beings in which we believe. The impressions with which we left this temple might possibly have been somewhat modified, had we been permitted to attend at the hour of worship; but from all that we subsequently heard of the morals of these Chinese, I am led to believe, that only such among mankind as address their prayers under the influence of fear rather than of gratitude, could sympathise with, or find any common bond of interest with, the worshippers of *Looyee*.

The dress of the figures resembled neither that of priest nor warrior, nor of any fanciful god or demi-god that I had ever before seen represented. An exaggerated clown's or pantaloon's dress of the pantomime, was the only thing to which it might be compared.

Another department of this temple consists of a gaudy building of one story, occupying the whole of the upper side of the little square in which it is placed. It has a flight of wooden steps in front of it, and a colon-

nade. The buildings on the rest of the sides of the square, have also steps before them, which reduce the level area in the centre to one half the dimensions of that which would be formed by the walls of the buildings. Lamps of talc and coloured paper were also displayed here, with the same too great profusion as every where else.

We ascended the flight of steps in face of the gaudy portion of the building, the whole front of which was open, save a latticed screen across a part on either side, and a low railing across the rest. This part of the temple appeared as if it were, on the present occasion at least, the most sacred. We were not permitted to pass the gate of the railing, though we could not say that we had any of the difficulty in fully viewing what was within, that Mussulman fanaticism throws in the way of strangers entering most of the mosques. Two fellows were here busily occupied with the extra decorations for the next, the most sacred of all the days of the festival, and of the year. Our guide could not, after the priest had forbidden us to enter, help making signs to the men occupied within, to signify our wish to pass the barrier before us; but they, by the same means in return, gave us to understand, though evidently in good humour, that although our sight might gratify its full sense, the pressure of a Christian foot within the edifice at this particular time would be too great a profanation to be tolerated. Nothing, however, that was within, was hid from our view. The dimensions of this distinct portion of the temple are by no means large, but the form is peculiar. It might be said, without an Irishism, seeing that the throne and altar by which the gods within stand, or upon which the holy emblems rest, must be considered one of its ends, that its breadth is greater than its length; which is, at least, a very awkward form for any work of art. From

the screen in front to the several slabs which project from the back wall, and exhibit the chief riches and decorations, the extent is not above five or six paces; and three more probably make up what has been called its length; while its breadth is the entire length of the platform of the colonnade, which is not much less than that of the square, or from about twenty to five and twenty paces.

The decorations in this portion of the temple consist almost wholly of artificial trees and flowers, which are in very great variety. Some of these would be exceedingly beautiful apart; but the enormous quantity of them wholly destroys their effect, and gives the place the appearance of a horticultural show.

To this monotony, however, there was some relief. Two colossal figures of warriors, or deities, were standing one on each side of a sort of altar in the centre, though they were half hidden by the flowers and tall shrubs which flourish about them, and a number of lambs slain and consecrated for the occasion, were lying upon the slabs which projected from the walls around the three closed sides of the building, amidst all the profusion of artificial vegetation.

On both sides of the temple there are passages of the same kind as those which we passed through in our way from the street. These lead to another court, in which stands the palace of the *Surgutchay*, or Governor of Maimatchin. We were not, however, at present permitted to proceed further in this direction.

In another court, we found two aged men sitting at the extremities of three or four steps that conducted to an estrade beneath a wooden shed, and upon which stood a sort of throne. This, the guide informed us, was the seat of the chief, when he sat in judgment upon offenders against the law, or to administer justice in case of civil disputes. Near at hand, we observed

sundry instruments of punishment and of torture, such as bastinadoes, whips, collars, chains, and others of which it was impossible for us to comprehend the application.

We now returned upon our steps to the street from which we had entered this close, and sacred or profane place. We found all as silent as before; and I now requested our guide to introduce us into any place that might resemble a shop. But there was nothing of the kind in the town; and, if there had been, as there was no current coin, there would have been no means of making any purchases but by exchange of articles of merchandise. Had we, indeed, had any objects of value, we might have exchanged them for others with any of the inferior merchants. But without such objects, we had not even an excuse for knocking at any door. We nevertheless entered one or two of the private courts. But although coloured lamps and flags decorated them, the absence of any thing in motion in any form within their contracted limits, made them appear in the highest degree gloomy and inhospitable.

We next passed to some of the lesser streets, all of which we found partaking more or less of the same character as the one we had first entered, without its decorations, though narrower and meaner in appearance. In one of these, however, we met a train of camels laden with European merchandise, which they were carrying out of the town.

This afforded me an opportunity of comparing the camel of the cold with that of the hot regions of the globe. The apparent difference consists in the darker colour and warmer skin of that of the north above that of the south. The coating upon the skins of some of these resembled that of a shaggy brown bear. They appeared of a larger size, too, than any I had seen before.

But as I did not measure any of them, I cannot be certain that this was not the effect of their superior covering, or of a deception caused by the miniature character of every thing in sight of which they stood.

In the sole street in which we saw any movement except that in which we met the camels, a tenant of one of the houses opened the door of his dwelling, and left it open while he passed to the opposite side of the street. This afforded us at least the opportunity of gratifying our curiosity to see the interior of one of the smaller houses, and we determined to profit by it. But as our guide would not so much as approach the door, to ask any such question as he might be able, for an excuse to enter, we placed ourselves upon the threshold, that we might see if there were any thing worth our taking notice of within. There appeared to be no furniture in the room, except two wooden stools which rested upon the bare ground. But upon one of these sat an old man in tattered attire, and very little of that. He was, however, hanging over a fire of charcoal, or live ashes, which was upon the ground. I addressed him in the Russian words for good morning, but received no reply. He merely raised his head, as if to look who intruded, stared sullenly for a moment, and then dropped his eyes, and hung over his fire again as if nothing had attracted his attention. From this we passed to the gate at which we had entered the town, and, by the neutral ground, returned to the Christian land.

## CHAP. VI.

### MAIMATCHIN—*continued.*

Difficulty of disciplining a Republican Servant.—Rendezvous at the Governor's at Kiachta.—Politeness of the Governor.—Embarrassment.—Drive to Maimatchin.—Silent Reception from the People.—Clamorous Reception by the Public Servants.—Effects of the two Extremes on the Spirits.—Arrival and Reception at the Government-house.—Greetings of the Representatives of Majesty.—Introduction of the Siberian Party.—Appearance of the Chinese Chief.—His Rank and Family.—The Palace.—The Apartment.—The Dinner-tables.—Chinese Conserves.—Method of Serving and Eating.—Rich Cookery and Correctives.—Difficulty of Eating Chinese Fashion.—Chinese Brandy.—Tea.—A German *Atcoopstchik.*—Scene in another Department of the Room.—Extravagance of Chinese.—Manner of Cutting Meat to serve up.—Abhorrent Accompaniments of the Feast.—Visit of the whole Party to the Theatre.—The Play.—Disgusting Acting.—The Party make their Exit to proceed to a Merchant's.—Supper at a Merchant's.—Ceremony.—Extravagance.—Wines.—Six other Suppers.—Separation of the Party.—Return to Troitskosavsk.

On the morning of the day of the full "White moon," we drove at an appointed hour to the government-house at Kiachta. I had heard so much of the etiquette to be observed at the Chinese governor's table, at which I was to be this day a guest, that I thought it necessary to put such order in my arrangements, as might seem to agree with the circumstances under which I made my appearance, and the character in which I was to enjoy the distinguished honour anticipated. My interpreter and servant, notwithstanding his republican predilections and his unintellectual avocation, was by no means wanting in good sense,

and was easily convinced that it was necessary for this great state occasion, that the little difference of rank that had been hitherto maintained between us, should be somewhat widened. He was, however, rather startled when I explained to him the character and the manner of carrying out our new relations to each other, which must now take place. In fact, I informed him, that it became necessary for me to assume an importance which, indeed, I had not even the ambition to attain, and put him in a position which he was certainly not born to fill. It was proper, I told him, that he should on this occasion stand behind my chair at dinner, instead of sitting beside me at the table, as he had done in the cottages of the Siberian peasants; and, moreover, that he should watch the movements of the Russian governor's servants, and imitate the most accomplished of them, even to the manner that they might take a kick, should such a chastisement be deemed necessary to the dignity of a European gentleman when at the table of the representative of his "Celestial Majesty."

The Swiss seemed, indeed, rather embarrassed and very grave at this communication; but when I insisted that his assent to the full terms of the proposition must be the condition of his accompanying me, his curiosity concerning what we might see, overcame his just scruples, and he assented to the prescribed terms with a tolerably good grace. However, lest he should be less manageable than I could wish, I contrived to spare him as much of my wardrobe as would place him so nearly on an equality with myself in the important particular of dress, that, happen what might, the Chinese eye could not be offended, nor a due respect to their chief suspected.

When we entered the reception room of the Russian governor at Kiachta, we found a party of five or six

persons assembled, all of whom, it was easy to perceive, were awaiting the same favour at the hands of his excellency, who was not yet present, that myself had been already promised. They were all merchants, or the representatives of merchants residing in the Russian capitals; and as I was anxious to obtain some hints concerning the business of the day, I entered into conversation with them, by the aid of my interpreter, before any one took a seat.

Our discourse did not prove very fruitful, but continued, until arrested by the appearance of the governor, who, rushing in with characteristic Russian precipitation when the spirit is awake, shook hands heartily with several of the party, and forced us all to be seated, and actually placed my so lately lessoned domestic upon the last chair, and would, if it had been permitted, have kept us all sitting while he remained himself standing. There was this consolation, however, we were not yet in China, and I might still have time before we entered the gates of Maimatchin, to reconstruct the frail edifice of my so lately assumed importance; and, as I knew I could not now speak with the delicacy the moment demanded, through an interpreter who would be the subject of the communication, I merely, after rising myself, desired the Swiss to do the same. The Swiss obeyed, and such a scene of bowing, with complimentary speeches, now took place between the representative of his Imperial Majesty and the honest sausage maker, as is sometimes seen to pass between an especially noble guest and a worthy burgess host.

Only a short time now passed, before we were all in our droshkies, and on our way to Maimatchin, escorted by a detachment of mounted Cossacks. We drove Russian pace through the first barrier, and across the neutral ground. But such was the state of the ways in the Chinese town, which are pressed by horses' feet and

bear wheel carriages but oncea year — for the inhabitants have neither the one nor the other — that after we had passed the gate, we were forced, whatever might have been the proper etiquette, to assume a procession pace.

As we proceeded thus slowly, still accompanied by the Cossacks, the Chinese people were gathered on either side the street, to gaze upon what could only have been a novel spectacle to any that might never have passed the Russian barrier. We concluded, therefore, that they came to do honour to the guests of their chief. There did not appear among them any other feeling than a slight degree of curiosity concerning, perhaps, our equipages, if, indeed, there was even that; and we passed through the grave mob directly up the main street: and, after turning where we who had been there the day before had left it, on our way to the temple, we arrived at the gate leading to the first of the courts before mentioned. Here we all alighted, and entered the gate in procession; the Cossacks bringing up the rear, also now on foot.

Up to this moment, all that we had seen of the Chinese, in spite of the novelty of the scenes, and of their gay flags and their coloured lanterns, wore a gloomy air, and was depressing to the spirits. But we no sooner now gained these courts, than the scene confounded us by its grotesque drollery, and sounds greeted our ears that seemed sufficient to raise up the very ghosts of the passed generations of men who sleep tranquilly in the Mongolian desert. Such a clatter, such a *charivari*, such a row, I never heard before. The court was full of musicians and clowns in a dozen different fancy dresses, and all were striving one against another, which should jump highest, or assume the greatest variety of attitudes in the shortest time, and who should make the greatest noise, that many rude

instruments which they played upon were capable of producing. Some beat drums and some tambourines, and some played an instrument similar to the bag-pipe; while all harmony, if there were any among the inferior instruments, was confounded by the thrice-deafening sounds of the gong. Noise seemed, indeed, every thing required, and the best musician, he that blew the pipes, tugged or scraped the strings of his instrument, or struck the gong the hardest. But whether there be any meeting of extremes in the effects of sounds, as in many other things in nature, this I know, that whereas I felt depressed before we entered this court, by, as I supposed, the silence that reigned among the multitude, so I never felt more exhilarating effects upon the spirits from the "concord of sweet sounds," than I now felt from these discordant and deafening noises.

Passing now this court, no doubt, all present being in the same frame of mind and good humour as that which I found myself thrown into by our clamorous reception, and also the court of the temple and the court where our steps who were of the party of yesterday had been arrested, we soon reached a court formed by the palace of the *surgutchay* or governor of the town. And now, literally rushing along under the quickening effects of the brave music, with no more dignity than we might have pressed to see a curiosity bazaar, we came in this haste and disorder into the presence of the representative of the great Asiatic Emperor, who received the Russian governor, standing near the bottom of a flight of steps that led to the door of his palace, with a hearty European shake of the hand.

The greetings of the two representatives of majesty being over, the Russian chief turned to introduce his party, which he did one by one, in using expressions

that it was fortunate it was not very important should be understood; and we had thus all successively the distinguished honour of shaking hands with the representative of his Celestial Majesty.

The *surgutchay* was a man of about sixty years of age, and of easy and polite manners. His dress was the same as that ordinarily worn by the Chinese, and did not appear to us to differ from that of the merchants, or even of his own servants that were in attendance, and is too well known to require description. We heard nevertheless, that he was of one of the highest families of Pekin, and that he was even a relation and friend of the Emperor himself. And we were likewise told, that the place he now filled was more lucrative than even many of the governments of the larger provinces, and that he was extremely rich.

The palace is an edifice of only one story. It has the door in the centre of one of the sides of the court which the building forms; and glass windows, which are not found in any other house in Maimatchin, form nearly the whole of its front, and one entire side of the court.

The two chiefs now entered the palace, followed by the Siberian party, which had a little augmented since we left the Russian governor's at Kiachta. We found a single large apartment, occupying the whole of the front of the building, the offices and other rooms being in the remaining portion. Upon our left hand, as we entered, appeared numbers of servants occupied in making arrangements, or preparing various appurtenances to the feast; and upon the other side there was one large table filling half that division of the room, and several smaller, set in a similar manner to those of a French restaurant.

As soon as the two chiefs had taken their places at the head of the largest of the tables upon benches which

served the place of chairs, all the Europeans and Siberians were requested by several Chinese, who seemed to do the honours like so many masters of ceremonies, to place themselves wherever they might find it most agreeable to them to sit. I seated myself two or three covers from the chief, at the principal table, and allowed the Swiss, after all, to place himself beside me; for it was easy, by this time, to perceive that of ceremony there was in reality little or none; and it would have been wrong to persist in the arrangements agreed upon.

The same *charivari* which had greeted our entrance to the series of courts through which we had passed, now commenced again in the court of the palace, as we seated ourselves at the tables. Our party still continued to augment, until there were between fifteen and twenty Europeans and Siberians seated at the different tables. There were also about the same number of Chinese in the room, all of whom had occupied themselves in accommodating and placing the guests, and were supposed by us, while they were thus employed, to be the *élite* of the population of Maimatchin, who had been invited to meet us at dinner. But after the feasting began, upon observing that none of them sat down, we made inquiries through our Mongol interpreter, and were informed that there was not a Chinese in the town of sufficient rank by many grades to sit at table with the chief, and indeed, that all those who were doing the friendly offices for the foreigners for whom the entertainment was solely intended, were only the servants and dependents of our exalted host. Nevertheless, we were told, at the same time, that there were other guests, whom we did not see, entertained in other chambers, according to the usage of the country, upon the sole occasion during the year upon which they were admitted into the palace.

There was nothing on the table when we seated ourselves; but presently, several large trays, resembling Pope-Joan boards, were placed before us, each of which contained about a dozen compartments, which were filled with different kinds of conserves. And at the same time, we were every one furnished with a small plate, a cup, and a little case knife resembling a dagger, and a pair of what are commonly called chopsticks by Europeans, which are used for forks, and which precisely resemble our ladies' knitting needles. The conserves were of as many different kinds as there were compartments in the board, and were cut into pieces about the size and of the same form as dice. Their appearance was so tempting, that I could not help tasting nearly every kind; and I thought some the nicest, and some the reverse of every thing of the sort of which I had ever before partaken. Some were sweet, and these were excellent, and some were sour, which were indifferent, and the rest were bitter and abominable. Yet they were so disguised, or so new to a European, that of all the tastes I am acquainted with, I could only distinguish the flavour of the Siberian apple and that of the lemon.

When all the party seemed to have eaten sufficiently of these, we were every one furnished with a shallow bowl, beside which was set a cup of vinegar. A large dish was now placed upon the table, filled with small morsels of roasted sucking pig floating in game broth. To serve ourselves in the most convenient manner with such portions of this as we pleased, we were given spoons so constructed as to admit of the broth retiring into a tube in the handle when the pieces of meat that were taken from the dish were put upon the plate.

To make use of the chopsticks after the Chinese manner, which is with one hand, is impossible for a European of less skill in the use of his fingers than a conjuror; and I confess, that I thought at first that

our condition would be as bad as that of my former fellow traveller and myself when we were entertained by the Kirgeeze, and that the *surgutchay* would be the only one able to get at the food on his own table. Had this been the case, however, it would not have been the fault of the hospitable and not greedy Chinese, who in pity for the deficiencies of his guests, which he very well knew, had, at least, taken care that we should not want proper instruction in the art of genteelly conveying the delicacies of his table to our mouths, and be reduced to use our fingers, like Turks and Arabs. And no sooner was this dish placed before us, than the servants, who were now quite as numerous as the guests, fell to instructing and aiding us in the difficult work. The passage, however, of every morsel of meat at the Chinese table, from the plate to the mouth, is on another account a double one; for such is the extreme richness of the dishes, that every piece taken up must be dipped into a cup of vinegar, which is by your side, before it is put into the mouth; and, in truth, we made very little progress in the art of feeding ourselves, for some time. The old adage of "many a slip between the cup and the lip," was never, indeed, better verified; and our efforts and disappointments would have afforded matter without limit for the pencil or pen of a humourist.

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short intervals during the repast; and the only want I felt, was of bread, of which there was none of any description, being an article, as I was informed, hardly known to the Chinese of the northern provinces of the empire.

Before we had been long at table, I was happy to find myself seated near a polite gentleman, a Russian subject of one of the German provinces of the empire, and *Otcoopstchik* of the district, Herr Engelhardt, who was residing with his family at Troitskosavsk. He had arrived after we were seated, but he was a guest under the same protection and upon the same terms as myself, and I lost no time in making his acquaintance.

While the feasting was bravely proceeding, after many dishes had been brought in, partaken of, and carried away, my new friend and myself slipped from the table, and went to visit the opposite department of the room, where new dishes were preparing to be served up, and which exhibited by no means the least curious of the scenes of the *surgutchay's* apartment. The profusion and the confusion were here almost equal. There were about a dozen servants occupied in preparing such quantities of meat as would have appeared superabundant, had there been twelve times the number of guests that there were present. I had observed before this, that several dishes that had been brought in, had been carried away untouched; yet the aspect of this department of the room resembled more the beginning than the end of a feast. Among other extravagances, we observed two lambs brought in roasted whole, and set upon trays upon the ground, to be prepared for serving up; and we were told they were brought from the temple where we had seen so many lying upon the slabs the day before. We wondered that they had not been thought too holy to nourish Christians; but this did not seem to be the

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numerous offspring of the Muses, perform for us in Christendom, the cook has perhaps to supply the place of in the Celestial Empire. But I must say I think the skill of the Chinese *artistes*, as far as a judgment may be formed from one feast, is as superior to that of any of our European cooks, unless an exception be made in favour of some of the better sort among the French, as the caterers for our more refined enjoyments, if we may judge from the difference between our music and the *charivaris* with which we were treated upon this occasion, are above those of the Chinese.

It required some patience to sit out the whole time of the dinner. It was disappointing, too, to see no Chinese at table except the *surgutchay*, though, had it been otherwise, any thing like discourse would have been impossible. There was no Russian to be found that could speak a word of the Chinese language; and all that was said by the *surgutchay* was first translated by a Mongol, who understood the Chinese imperfectly, into the commercial language before mentioned, which required yet another translation before it was fully understood by any but the elder residents at Kiachta; and again another, indeed, before myself could comprehend it. It may, therefore, be easily seen how little edifying or impressive was our table discourse to any one present.

But if there was little intellectual intercourse among the party assembled at the famous feast, an endeavour, at least, was made to gratify other senses than those we have seen so well satisfied, by performances of the in the court of the palace upon the instruments above described, accompanied with dancing, but which, in truth, for discord and noise, and for the disgusting character of the dance, exceeded every thing that I have ever at any time witnessed.

Nearly the whole front of the palace upon the court

being, as before stated, of glass, we could see all the antics now performed for our amusement, as well as hear all the noise. The Cossacks that had accompanied us (for there are no Chinese soldiers in Maimatchin) strangely enough kept the court, while the troop of dancers, with instruments in their hands, displayed their antics enclosed between two rows of musicians. It is impossible to imagine any scene more thoroughly revolting, than that which we here witnessed. The war-dance of the savages in America, which, however, I have only seen performed in sport, is the only thing that it appeared to me in the slightest to resemble. But that has its meaning. We can easily understand the relations between violent motion of the body, with distorted features, accompanied by the voice of the wild man, and savage warfare and triumph. But what agreement there could be between the discord of harsh sounds, accompanied by antics such as appeared suited to demons alone, and a joyous welcome to friends, we could not conceive. The latter portion of the dance, indeed, consisted chiefly in the exhibitors leaping and throwing the feet in the air, with contortions of the body such as we could not conceive any men but maniacs performing. But the most disgusting portion of the scene was, the presence of several full-grown men dressed in women's attire, and profusely adorned with flowers, who played the same antics as the rest. In fine, if such be the amusements of the fine folks at Pekin, the Chinese must be barbarians indeed.

It was hardly dark when the *surgutchay* rose from his seat; and as the table broke up, it was announced that the whole party was about to leave the palace to proceed to the temple of the Muses mentioned in the account of yesterday's promenade. Our entrance into the palace upon our arrival, had been sufficiently undignified; but our retirement was a perfect scramble.

The Chief of Maimatchin, with the Russian governor by his side, led the way with a precipitation that excused in others the confusion that followed. Servants were in waiting to hand us our *schoubas*, and every one slipped on his own, as he could find it, and followed the steps of the two governors, who were preceded by the Cossack guard.

Of Herr Engelhardt we saw no more that evening; but his place was supplied by the Russian governor's interpreter, who had now orders to attend upon the foreigners for the rest of the evening, on account of the two chiefs, as he informed us, having found all attempts at conversation ineffectual, and consequently his attendance unnecessary.

It was but a few steps from the court of the palace to the court of the theatre, upon entering which, we found ourselves in the midst of a blaze of coloured lamps, that had been lighted while we were at dinner, and beneath flags of all colours and dimensions, such as have been before mentioned, which were hanging from strings that crossed the court from the roofs of the houses around. We did not stop here to examine any thing; but after passing the passage that we had threaded yesterday, which led to the interior of the open theatre, we found ourselves immediately before the scene.

The theatre of Maimatchin consists of a mere open space, with a stage on one side, and booths upon the other, that might perhaps accommodate about 200 persons. The booths are placed upon either side of the passage at which we entered, and they are reserved for the use of the wealthier classes. The space between these and the stage, which would form our pit, is not accommodated with seats. Before the curtain, which was down when we entered, projected a large portion of the stage in the form of a semicircle, over which

our condition would be as bad as that of my former fellow traveller and myself when we were entertained by the Kirgeeze, and that the *surgutchay* would be the only one able to get at the food on his own table. Had this been the case, however, it would not have been the fault of the hospitable and not greedy Chinese, who in pity for the deficiencies of his guests, which he very well knew, had, at least, taken care that we should not want proper instruction in the art of genteelly conveying the delicacies of his table to our mouths, and be reduced to use our fingers, like Turks and Arabs. And no sooner was this dish placed before us, than the servants, who were now quite as numerous as the guests, fell to instructing and aiding us in the difficult work. The passage, however, of every morsel of meat at the Chinese table, from the plate to the mouth, is on another account a double one; for such is the extreme richness of the dishes, that every piece taken up must be dipped into a cup of vinegar, which is by your side, before it is put into the mouth; and, in truth, we made very little progress in the art of feeding ourselves, for some time. The old adage of "many a slip between the cup and the lip," was never, indeed, better verified; and our efforts and disappointments would have afforded matter without limit for the pencil or pen of a humourist.

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dancers we had seen exhibit in the court of the palace.

As soon as the seeming lovers appeared to be tired of ogling each other in silence, they rose from their seats, and a dialogue commenced between them, all the words and expressions of which seemed as if they were formed of three, or at the most four, primary sounds, with certainly, however, considerable variety of intonation. At least, my own, perhaps, not very delicate ear, could distinguish very little more than *Ching Coo Loo.* But the interpreter, whose learning did not indeed go much beyond a fair knowledge of the commercial language, which has but little of the Chinese in it, told us, as it was indeed very easy to guess, that the actors were, a prince in the character of an ardent lover, and a royal coquette.

Whatever might have been the subject of the drama, its representation soon became tedious to us, not more on account of our ignorance of the language, than from the want of spirit and action and change, and the paucity of the actors, with the meanness of the scenery. Some passages of the play, too, were in the highest degree disgusting, from the acting of the fellow who performed the part of the princess, but who bore no resemblance to any thing feminine that nature ever made. To add to this, the thermometer stood at 22 degrees of frost; and although we were all in *schoubas*, we were hardly prepared, even after so sumptuous a dinner, to sit long in the open air. I was not sorry, therefore, when in less than an hour after the time we took our places, the two chiefs arose to depart.

Our guide now informed us that we were to go in procession to visit some of the merchants of the town at their own houses, which the *surgutchay* was accustomed to do upon this the only day in the year on which he

served the place of chairs, all the Europeans and Siberians were requested by several Chinese, who seemed to do the honours like so many masters of ceremonies, to place themselves wherever they might find it most agreeable to them to sit. I seated myself two or three covers from the chief, at the principal table, and allowed the Swiss, after all, to place himself beside me; for it was easy, by this time, to perceive that of ceremony there was in reality little or none; and it would have been wrong to persist in the arrangements agreed upon.

The same *charivari* which had greeted our entrance to the series of courts through which we had passed, now commenced again in the court of the palace, as we seated ourselves at the tables. Our party still continued to augment, until there were between fifteen and twenty Europeans and Siberians seated at the different tables. There were also about the same number of Chinese in the room, all of whom had occupied themselves in accommodating and placing the guests, and were supposed by us, while they were thus employed, to be the *élite* of the population of Maimatchin, who had been invited to meet us at dinner. But after the feasting began, upon observing that none of them sat down, we made inquiries through our Mongol interpreter, and were informed that there was not a Chinese in the town of sufficient rank by many grades to sit at table with the chief, and indeed, that all those who were doing the friendly offices for the foreigners for whom the entertainment was solely intended, were only the servants and dependents of our exalted host. Nevertheless, we were told, at the same time, that there were other guests, whom we did not see, entertained in other chambers, according to the usage of the country, upon the sole occasion during the year upon which they were admitted into the palace.

There was nothing on the table when we seated ourselves; but presently, several large trays, resembling Pope-Joan boards, were placed before us, each of which contained about a dozen compartments, which were filled with different kinds of conserves. And at the same time, we were every one furnished with a small plate, a cup, and a little case knife resembling a dagger, and a pair of what are commonly called chopsticks by Europeans, which are used for forks, and which precisely resemble our ladies' knitting needles. The conserves were of as many different kinds as there were compartments in the board, and were cut into pieces about the size and of the same form as dice. Their appearance was so tempting, that I could not help tasting nearly every kind; and I thought some the nicest, and some the reverse of every thing of the sort of which I had ever before partaken. Some were sweet, and these were excellent, and some were sour, which were indifferent, and the rest were bitter and abominable. Yet they were so disguised, or so new to a European, that of all the tastes I am acquainted with, I could only distinguish the flavour of the Siberian apple and that of the lemon.

When all the party seemed to have eaten sufficiently of these, we were every one furnished with a shallow bowl, beside which was set a cup of vinegar. A large dish was now placed upon the table, filled with small morsels of roasted sucking pig floating in game broth. To serve ourselves in the most convenient manner with such portions of this as we pleased, we were given spoons so constructed as to admit of the broth retiring into a tube in the handle when the pieces of meat that were taken from the dish were put upon the plate.

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thing was said beyond opinions from time to time expressed by the Siberian party among themselves, concerning the relative claims of the several Chinese merchants to their admiration, on account of the quality of their wines, and the delicacy of their conserves, which were doubtless every where the same.

By the time the *surgutchay* had thus duly honoured all these, the chief merchants of Maimatchin, with his yearly visit, and the merchants had paid all the honours in their power to the representative of their sovereign and his guests, it was about midnight, which is the hour at which the two chiefs were accustomed after their annual meeting, to take leave of each other. And now as soon as we gained the streets after the seventh supper, the *surgutchay*, followed by his placid or grave retinue, took his way to his close home, and our party, escorted by the Cossacks mounted, bade adieu to the narrow streets and artificial lights of Maimatchin, to breathe again in a freer space, and to enjoy the softer light of the satellite whose annual *fête* we had come to aid in honouring.

## CHAP. VII.

### MAIMATCHIN — *continued.*

Reverse Side of the Picture of Chinese Manners.—The Painter's Account of the Treatment of a Merchant.—Herr Engelhardt's Family.—Intercourse between this Family and the Traveller.—Curiosity of the Ladies about our Queen.—The Knowledge of Britain chiefly from Romances.—Tale recounted to the Traveller by the Ladies.—Adventures of a Chinese Girl.—Inhumanity of the Chinese.

We have hitherto seen this little sample of the Chinese people in their best humour, and their miniature city in its holiday attire; and all has been kindness, hospitality, urbanity. But truth demands, that what has been written should be accompanied by a report of such information as the traveller was able to obtain concerning the lives and manners of this peculiar people.

About this time, a caravan, as we have seen, was arriving by detachments at the border town, and one of the merchants who had accompanied the advanced party, and was deeply interested in the merchandise which it brought, had occasion to transact business with the representative of his Celestial Majesty, whom we have just seen so urbane and so condescending. An interview was sought and granted, and the merchant appeared in the presence. But it unfortunately happened, no doubt owing to the all-engrossing character of the affairs of commerce upon the mind, that instead of bending the knee which the etiquette of the *surgutchay's* court required, he instinctively bent that which he was accustomed to bend first when he mounted his camel.

The error escaped not the eye of the *surgutchay;* and fo this offence this merchant was led immediately to th place for the punishment of criminals, and was ther made to expiate the crime which, in the eye of the *sur gutchay*, he had committed, by receiving 200 blows o the bastinado upon his bare feet.

I have mentioned the disappointment which I ex perienced at not meeting the gentleman at Kiachta o Troitskosavsk upon whom I had calculated for such ai as is most useful to a foreigner very slightly acquainte with the language of the country in which he is tra velling. This was, however, in a great measure com pensated by the kind attentions of the governor, and my good fortune in meeting with Herr Engelhardt, the Russo-German gentleman already mentioned in the account of the dinner at Maimatchin. With this gentleman and his amiable family, I spent a portion of the remainder of the time I was at Troitskosavsk. The position and character of this family were such as to excite great interest in a stranger. Herr Engelhardt, unlike the majority of those who enjoy such a lucrative ap pointment as he held, was living in this remote part of the empire as plainly and unostentatiously as if he were residing in a country where respect was chiefly ceded to education and character, rather than to the display of riches, too often, in the less happy states of society, the sole mark of merit, and even the sole source of power; or, like a native merchant, whose gains have not yet changed the simplicity of his former life, for the show and extravagances of his country men of other avocations, of which we have seen some thing in other parts of the country. All those indeed whom I had before seen enjoying this appointment were living in such a style, that I expected to find the *otcoopstchik* of Troitskosavsk, the last of all its in habitants whose acquaintance it might be desirable for

a stranger not in search of the affectation of European refinements to cultivate.

Herr Engelhardt's family consisted of his wife, a lady of elegant manners, with European accomplishments, and three grown-up daughters possessing the delicate beauty of a softer climate, and a mixture of the manners of refined life with the simplicity natural to the rareness of their association with any of their equals. The unreserved intercourse between this family and myself, had just that kind of character that distance and the charge of transport give to the wares that are exchanged between the parts of the globe the most remote from one another. A newspaper very rarely reaches to this distance from the great cities of the civilised world; and the travellers that the Siberians see, are usually of that class which little concern themselves about European affairs. General news was therefore the staple which I had to offer in our intellectual exchange, and accounts of Maimatchin were the chief of the commodities I received in return. While it was my part to speak, the ladies especially were above all things curious about every thing that concerned our fair sovereign. They delighted in contemplating one of their sex reigning over an empire comprising a population of about 150 millions of attached subjects; and they took great interest in such accounts as I was able to give them of our young Queen's family. Scott's novels, through a German translation, embraced nearly all the knowledge of the young ladies concerning our history; and they had imagined our character still little changed from that which belonged to our ancestors in the reign of Elizabeth. I need not state what I told them of my country in relation to our manners, and the prevailing features of our national character at the present day.

The accounts that I received from this excellen family concerning their peculiar neighbours, when i was their turn to speak, were not spare; but I shal confine myself to a single tale, which seems to m to throw more light upon the Chinese character, thar any thing I heard that might be comprised in an equal space.

It has been already mentioned in the account of this town, that the inhabitants are all men and boys. No woman and no female child is allowed, indeed, at any time to enter this exclusive society of Pekin merchants and their dependents. But Maimatchin has not always been inhabited by the male sex alone. During the reign of conjugal licence, and, we must needs believe, of greater happiness to the inhabitants than that which they now enjoy, but which terminated some years since, the strictest guard was kept upon the actions of the fair sex in the town, lest any unholy predilection should lead to consequences that might tarnish the pure blood of the Celestial race. I never saw any Chinese women, and I do not admire such pictures as I have seen of the beauties among them. But I am not unacquainted with the impression that the affections of men are apt to receive, when the opportunity occurs, of only beholding, without enjoying the interchange of verbal intercourse with, any of the other sex in a condition that commands in us the passion nearly allied to fancy—human pity; and I should not, therefore, be among those who might censure the precaution on the part of the Chinese, whenever they are the near neighbours of a more manly people than themselves. It happened, however, during the felicitous period in the social history of the people of Maimatchin, that a girl who was of too tender years to excite jealousy, under the influence, as was supposed, of a degree of curiosity, probably rare even among her own

sex in China, strayed away from her home, crossed the neutral ground between the border towns unobserved, and was seen standing alone, regarding the new scenes that the great open place in the Russian town presented to her wondering eyes. It was already late in the evening, when she was discovered by a party of two or three of the Siberians, and there happened to be no other inhabitant of Maimatchin in Kiachta at the time. One addressed her in the Russian tongue, and another spoke a few words of the Mongolian to her, and another tried the mixed tongue; but they all received in reply only a few words in the language that none among them understood. The girl, however, exhibited little or no symptoms of fear, and, when caressed, smiled cheerfully. The novelty of the circumstance soon excited much interest in many of the people of Kiachta, mingled with suspicion that the little stranger had been abandoned by her parents, and put without the gates of the Chinese town to perish. They were prodigal of their kindness to her, and thought of Maimatchin as the last place to which to conduct her. They vied, indeed, with each other, in the pleasure of entertaining her until an opportunity should occur of solving the mystery of her appearance in the Russian town. It happened, however, that a lady near whose dwelling the girl had been found, was attracted to the spot by the gathering which the circumstance had occasioned, and she claimed the right of her sex to be the child's protector, which was readily acknowledged by those who could only oppose the right of discovery and possession. Nevertheless, it was very difficult to know what steps ought to be taken, that might be attended with the least danger to the harmless girl, and the good understanding which existed between the two people; for, danger of some kind and degree they very well knew attended every fresh transaction,

however trivial, between the Chinese and any European whatsoever.

The cause of the girl's appearance, and every thin that concerned her, continued to be mere conjecture Was she among them, a mere curious spectator of th novelties around her? Or, was she in search of he mother, concealed from her sight for some evil purpos in Maimatchin? Or, was she a fugitive, towards whom it would be to act a most unchristian part, were they to send her back to the place from which she had fled! Grave and tender questions were by turns still put to her, by words and by signs; but they received all the same answer in words incomprehensible to them, accompanied by the most complaisant smile. The girl yielded, however, with artless confidence to the first attempt made by the lady to lead her within the shelter of a Russian house. Upon entering the house she uttered some involuntary expressions which seemed indicative of astonishment; but she continued quite composed, and took some food that was offered to her; and all anxiety concerning her position was soon forgotten in the interest which her novel dress, manners, smiles, and artless confidence, had excited. In fine, the adventures of the little wanderer were terminated for the night by the ladies placing her in a bed in their own apartment, where she slept as soundly and tranquilly as she could have done, had she been by her mother's side.

In the morning when the cherished little stranger awoke, the family with whom she had lodged, nothing diminished in their interest for their charge, began to think it time to give notice to the Russian governor of the presence of a Chinese subject among them; and a party, composed of both sexes, led the girl out to present her at the government-house. They were not, however, above half-way across the broad square, which lay between their abode and the palace, before two

Chinese appeared, who, it was soon evident, were in search of the girl. There was nothing particular about the appearance or manner of these men as they approached, to afford any clue to the still unsolved mystery. The girl, whether they were her kinsmen or not, which was never known, seemed to recognise them as soon as they appeared; and she did not hesitate for a moment to obey what seemed to the Russians present, to be a simple command to her to accompany them.

No objection was made by the protectors of the girl during the past night, to render up their interesting charge, nor were they able to hold a word of conversation with the men who claimed her. They accompanied the Chinese, however, and the little adventurer to the Russian barrier, where they took a feeling leave of the girl, and the two parties separated.

But would that the story could end here! Why our common Creator has made the wide difference between the feelings of his creatures of the same order, which the end of this tale reveals, who is able to tell us? The blood of their race was supposed by the inhabitants of this border town to be contaminated, even by the circumstances above related, and the offence must be avenged before the stain could be expunged. Before the sun set, that was on the meridian when the Russian ladies took leave of their cherished little charge, the innocent girl was decapitated, and her lifeless body cast upon the plain beyond the walls of the town, to be devoured by the wolves.

## CHAP. VIII.

### RETURN JOURNEY FROM KIACHTA TO SELENGINSK.

Leaving Troitskosavsk.—Reflection on what we had seen.—Quarrel with a *Smotritel.*—Arrangement of the Government to check the Roguery of the *Chinovnik.*—The cold night Promenade.—Beauty of the Night.—Solitude.—Departure.—We again take the Ice.—Arrival at Selenginsk.—Notice of the Town.—Visit to an Exiled Family.—Romantic Spot.—Account of a former English Mission.—Laborious Efforts of the Mission.—Ill-Success of the Mission.—Causes of the Failure.

HAVING now attained the principal object of these travels beyond the Baikal, we set off upon our return to the capital of Eastern Siberia. We commenced our journey as usual at an early hour in the night. The cold, as we left Troitskosavsk, was at 22 degrees; but the atmosphere was still, and the "white moon," now in her third quarter, was rising in a cloudless sky, and every sign was propitious.

As it was the first time that I had returned upon my steps during these travels, there was less to invite attention than on any former occasion. Nobody is unacquainted with that state of mind when the impression of new scenes which we have lately beheld being too strong to permit us to fall soundly asleep at the proper hour of repose, our discursive thoughts present us with images, which we know not whether to attribute to the sober certainty of the waking reason, or to the less restrained faculty ever active within us, "both when we wake and when we sleep."

As the *tarantass* proceeded, and there was nothing

heard but the trampling of the horses, and now and then a monotonous note from the *yemstchik*, my thoughts returned to Maimatchin, and, in a kind of traveller's *résumé*, presented all we had seen during our intercourse with its peculiar population. We seemed to be again promenading through the silent streets amidst their gaudy decorations and depressing silence, and to dine again with the representative of the sovereign of the "Celestial Empire," to visit the temples, to attend the theatre, and to sup again in the houses of the seven merchants in the good company of the same exalted personage as before. But while these images were succeeding one another in the mind of one at least of the travellers, amid reflections concerning the degree of human degradation to which the millions that this little town represented are subjected, we were suddenly aroused by the oft-heard cry, "*Niet locarde*" (No horses).

We had arrived at the post station-house at Oustkiachtinskaia, where we were once more received with those well-known words. The letter of the governor at Irkoutsk, which had wrought miracles on a former occasion, was now presented; but this time it produced no effect. The *smotritel* informed us, that every horse in the village had been attached to a caravan on its route to Kiachta, which had left the station about an hour before our arrival. But as we had met nothing on our way, we were doubtful of the truth of his report, and determined, at least, to note the circumstance in the manner which the law affords the traveller the opportunity of doing.

The means, indeed, which are provided for obtaining redress, on account of any injury that one may suffer by detention or ill-usage of any kind at the stations, is, as far as the intention of the law goes, excellent; but it is seldom resorted to, on account of the

delay and inconvenience attending the administration of the law, which are incident to a country where the distances between the towns honoured by the residence of persons in authority are so great. At each of the stations, a book is kept chained to the table, for the express purpose of the traveller registering such grievances as he may think he has suffered; and we now demanded pen and ink, for the purpose of setting down the complaints for which we took it for granted that we had just cause. But when the *smotritel*, who seemed at first to have no dread of our proceeding, was informed that the complaints were to be written in a language which he did not understand, his alarm became so great, lest we should do him some wrong, that he took possession of the materials for writing, and it was only by taking the pen and ink from him by force, that we were able to effect our purpose. I wrote down, however, merely the hour at which we arrived, and the answer we had received to our application for horses, and this in English, which it was not likely would soon be interpreted.

We then removed our effects into the *sani* which we had left here on our way to Kiachta; and as I was the best clothed of the two, I determined, for their security, to sleep in my place, just as if we were continuing the journey: and so went quietly to bed in the midst of my furs.

The thermometer at the time we had left Troitskosavsk, was at 22 degrees of cold, and was probably now about 26 degrees. But I had slept in the open air uninjured when it was much lower, and I expected even a more agreeable night than I was accustomed to enjoy when we were travelling. I was, however, mistaken in this; and I had very soon the proof how much more the cold is felt when we are at perfect rest, than when in motion, even without personal exertion; and I found it now too great to admit of risking sound

slumber, where there might happen nothing to break it; and, being unwilling to enter the house again after our disagreement with the *smotritel*, I took my gun and ammunition, and set off upon an excursion about the precincts of the village by the bright light of the waning "white moon," armed rather against the chance of meeting wolves, than in search of any thing, whether harmless or ferocious, to destroy.

It might be difficult to convey a fair idea of the calm interest attending a night tour alone, amid the silent wastes of a gloomy region, like that in which we were now travelling, which must proceed rather from the absence of objects calculated to produce impressions, than from such scenes as the daylight exhibits and our senses recognise.

The air was at rest, the earth was colourless, and no sound indicated the presence of any thing that had life or motion. What should a traveller attempt to extract from such absolute nothingness around him, that might be transferred to the mind of another? Yet may moments like these be among the most memorable of those he will experience. Tired of looking on vacancy, his eyes instinctively turn upwards, and his thoughts follow them; and how shall he escape the impressions which the firmament, amidst the solitude of a Siberian night, must ever impart?

In the morning we were furnished with horses; and with our winter vehicle, we descended to the river, and were soon once more at full speed upon the smooth surface of the Selenga. And as we experienced no further impediment to our journey, we arrived at Selenginsk soon after dark upon the same evening.

I had been furnished by a lady at Irkoutsk with a letter to an exiled family residing in this vicinity; and, as this is the centre of the Bouriat country, of the inhabitants of which I wished to see more than the

neighbourhood of Irkoutsk afforded the opportunity for, I had determined to make as long a stay here as might be necessary for that purpose. We drove, therefore, directly to the house of the chief of the police, to endeavour to obtain his aid to procure quarters.

We found this officer at home: and he was no sooner acquainted with our wants, than he politely gave us a letter to one of the wealthier inhabitants of the place, containing an order to the party to provide us with a proper apartment. We had, however, four more versts to drive upon the river, before we attained our appointed lodgings, owing to the town being in the condition of undergoing a change of site, by which it at present consists of two distinct parts. The more ancient part, where we were to lodge, though not low, stands upon a point of land which exposes it to the danger (to which it has been several times subjected) of being carried away by the spring floods and the masses of ice which sweep down the river at that season. This division of the town, nevertheless, still comprises the largest number of houses and the chief part of the population. We counted eighty houses during our stay here, which had the appearance of being inhabited: in the midst of which, however, there were many tenantless buildings, in ruins or rapidly falling to decay. The ancient church, being of wood, and left without the frequent repairs which buildings of that material require, was fast decaying, and presented a miserable object of neglect. We heard that the inhabitants of this portion of the town amounted to about 400, but that those of the new portion did not exceed 100, who were chiefly indeed composed of *chinovnik*, for whom there are several government offices. There were, however, two merchants among them, by whom both the town and the vicinity were supplied with such European goods as the inhabitants were able to consume.

Upon inquiring of the good people on whom we were quartered, we learned that the family to whom the letter above mentioned was addressed, resided at the distance of four versts below this part of the town, upon the banks of the river. In the morning, therefore, I sent the Swiss with the letter, and a message to say that I would wait upon them, if convenient, at a later hour in the day. But I received a note in return from one of the gentlemen of the family, to say, that the lady to whom the letter was more especially addressed, was lying dangerously ill, and that the situation of the family was consequently such as to render it impossible for them to receive my visit.

This was a great disappointment to me, not less on account of what I had heard of the amiability of the family, than for the want I should find of the information I had calculated upon obtaining from them, to facilitate my attainment of the objects of an excursion that I had determined upon making while in this vicinity, for the purpose of visiting the *Khomba Lama* or great high-priest of the people in whose proper country we were now travelling, and who are of the Buddhist religion. The Swiss, however, brought information, that the family occupied one of two houses that had been built for two English missionaries, who, after having subsequently been long occupied in endeavouring to convert the Bouriats to Christianity, had been withdrawn, and that the other was tenanted by an old Dutch exiled naval commander and his family, one of the ladies of which spoke the French language. I did not, therefore, hesitate in determining to pay this family a visit.

The spot which these two families had chosen, or which had been appointed for their dwelling, is one of the most romantic in this part of Siberia. The river as we approached the site upon which the two houses stand,

in turning to the left, seemed to terminate in a basin. The houses are situated upon the opposite bank of the river to that upon which the town of Selenginsk is seated; and they stand upon the edge of a narrow inclined plain, sinking from the abrupt base of steep and rugged hills, and immediately in front of a bold range of other hills, which rise upon the opposite side of the stream, and present more vegetation than the greater part of the hilly portions of the banks of the Selenga.

We found the ancient Dutch commander and his family at home; and, after a polite reception, I received from the ladies among them in particular, a variety of useful information concerning my projected visit to the *Khomba Lama*, and also an account of the result of the labours of the missionaries above mentioned.

The exiles informed me that the mission had indeed been wholly unsuccessful. This result, however, of the enterprise, and of much labour and zeal, they were convinced was by no means to be attributed to want either of zeal or capability on the part of the missionaries, whose literary labours and whose success in this respect had been wonderful. They had acquired the Russian, Mantchou, and Mongolian tongues, the last of which is spoken by the Bouriats, and all at the same time; and they had not only formed a grammar, and originated and completed a dictionary of the Mongolian tongue, but they had also made a translation of the Bible into that language, the merit of which was attested by the Russian priests of the country who were perfectly familiar with the language of the people. But notwithstanding all their labours, not a single Bouriat had been converted by them, although there were a few who, for worldly gain, pretended to embrace Christianity.

"The mission," said the lady who was my principal informant, and whose words I shall as nearly as possible

repeat, "only failed, because the undertaking was beyond the power of man to accomplish, unaided by more than his own genius. The missionaries had all the zeal and perseverance of the apostles, but they wanted their power of working miracles, or the aid of some such startling circumstances as the history of religious revolutions has often presented to us, and without which, all efforts at all times to convert the Bouriats will be equally fruitless."

## CHAP. IX.

### VISIT TO SOUGGIRA, THE CAPITAL VILLAGE OF THE BOURIATS, AND SEAT OF THE BUDDHIST RELIGION IN SIBERIA.

The Bouriats.—Their Settlement.—Population.—Commencement of the Journey.—Anticipations.—Advice to very dull Travellers.—Folly of being too incredulous.—Belief of the Bouriats.—Buddhism.—Lamas.—Lamaseries.—*Khomba*, or Great Lama.—Mysteries of the Religion.—Immortality of the *Khomba Lamas*.—Transmigration of Souls.—Passage of a Range of Hills.—Paucity of Snow.—Fine Views.—Descent of the Hills.—The Lake Gvosimeer.—Passage of the Lake.—Arrival at the Village of Souggira.—Sensation among the Lamas.—Reception.—The Lamasery.—Alight at the Dwelling of the *Khomba Lama*.—Ceremonious Reception at the Palace by two inferior Lamas.—Pious Awe of our *Yemstchik*.—Discourse with these Lamas.—Interview with the *Khomba Lama*.—Hideous Features and Deformity of the *Khomba Lama*.—Awkward Position.—Description of the Apartment.—Respect paid the *Khomba Lama*.—A new Interpreter.—Discourse.—Impressions received.—Curiosity about the British Sovereign.—Unprofitable Character of the Discourse.—Impressions left.—A Wigwam in the Court.

At Selenginsk we were in the midst of the Bouriats of Siberia, the chief strength of whose race is in Mongolia, within the boundaries of the Chinese empire, and the seat of whose religion, which is Buddhism, is at Llassa, the capital of Tibet. Their settlements extend far into the Russian territory, and they compose nearly the whole of the population of the country which lies south and south-east of the Lake Baikal, their numbers, as stated by their lamas or priests, amounting to about 200,000 souls.

Upon the second morning after our arrival at Selenginsk, at an early hour, we commenced our contemplated journey to the Bouriat village of *Souggira*, the name of which signifies in the language of the country, *behind the Lake*, which agrees, as we shall see, with the position of the place. But before entering upon an account of this journey, which will embrace a visit to the *Khomba Lama*, or Great High Priest of the Bouriats, who resides at this their chief village in Siberia, and some account of the temples and the forms of worship which are peculiar to the Buddhist religion, it will be as well to state the impressions under which the travellers set out upon this expedition.

I do not envy the enjoyments, nor covet the reputation of those who will for ever submit every object they survey, and every impression they receive, to the often inconvenient ordeal of their severest judgment. Were the earth of a rectangular figure, were we able to frame a poem by diagrams, and were a curve line and a figure of speech unknown, our understandings might be with advantage exclusively consulted concerning all we hear and all we see; but we might then expect to find little beauty to contemplate, and few tales of interest to listen to, throughout the longest pilgrimage by land or by water. Since Nature, however, has filled the world, both moral and physical, with beauty, variety, motion, and change, when we travel in lands that are new to us, wherefore should we not look upon their varied surface, and the still more varied character of their inhabitants and of the institutions under which they live, just as they are, or as they seem to be, to those who know no other, instead of deadening our interest and wasting our time in indulging in vain regrets that they are not what we would wish them to be? But perhaps we ought, above all, to regard with respect the opinions of all weak mortals possessing a common nature

with ourselves, concerning, in particular, the great First Cause before whom all nations and people bend the knee, and in some form or other adore.

If a traveller, indeed, should set out upon a journey for the very purpose of reforming and reducing every thing he may meet with to his own standard of excellence or perfection, his case might be peculiar, and such as we have nothing to do with, and have nothing to object to. But those who travel to see what the world really is, rather than for the purpose of making it better, may find an advantage in not too constantly appealing to their sober reason to form a judgment concerning what they behold. The voice of the stranger, that proclaims to assembled multitudes who may be under any spell whatsoever, that all they believe, and all they witness and deem sacred is unworthy their regard, will never be heard. Let us then, on this occasion, fortify ourselves against the manifest error of disputing with the doctors in the temple of their own faith.

At the time of the ancient moralists, men already complained of the too short span of life, to admit of our accomplishing any thing important in which we engage.

"Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam."

Nor have the greatest moralists among the moderns been less disposed to complain of this condition upon which we enjoy existence,

"Our life can little else supply,
But just to look about us and to die."

The mortal portion of our two-fold nature begins to decline in activity and strength, before the spirit has ceased to cultivate and improve the attributes which are peculiarly its own.

I did not think when I entered Siberia, that I should

in the course of these travels, have the good fortune to see and converse with a being deemed by men like ourselves to be immortal, or rather, as we trust that we are all immortal, with one whose spirit is believed to have existed for centuries, and to be doomed never to quit this world, to enter into that we know not of, or in other words, never, to all further uses here, really to die. Ghosts have been described "shrieking on the wind" by night, or "folded in the vapours of a fenny field," or "harrowing up the souls" of men upon the eve of battle. But we were now on our journey, to see and converse, as we trusted, in plain day, with one who, since an infinity of years past, has, in the opinions of myriads of our fellow-men, walked the earth, and taught by day and slept like all good people by night.

The simple Bouriats, in common with the whole human race, bow down before some being by whose power they suppose they exist, and whose beneficence they acknowledge. Like other races of men, they have also their peculiar faith in certain communications from the Deity to their forefathers, consisting of mysteries mingled with some moral precepts, and accompanied with rules for the observance of religious rites; and their lamas or priests teach the one and perform the other.

At the capital of Tibet dwells the head of their religion, the *Dalai Lama*, whose soul is believed to be an immediate emanation from the essence of their supreme deity Buddha, and to enjoy immortality. Throughout Tartary, Mongolia, and Tibet, and in a part of China, and also of Siberia, and wherever the worship of Buddha prevails, there are towns and villages that are wholly of a religious character. They consist for the most part of temples dedicated to the worship of Buddha, and a lamasery, containing from 300 or 400, up to 15,000, and even 20,000 lamas of the several

orders known among them. Over every lamasery presides a chief, who is believed to enjoy the same immortality as the grand head of their religion at Llassa; and the chief of the lamasery at the holy village of Souggira is the head of all the Buddhists of Siberia, and is called by the Bouriats the *Khomba*, or *Grand* Lama.

Here we must, however, remark, that not more than among any other people, is flesh and blood believed by the Buddhists to be immortal. Thus, as with the bodies of other men, they inter that of their *Khomba Lama* who seems to die, but in the firm assurance that the spirit still lives, very soon to recover from some temporary inconvenience incident to a change it undergoes, again to preside over them in a fresh and new body. At the instant, indeed, according to their faith, that the spirit of the *Khomba Lama* quits its habitation in one body, it enters into another, which becomes its successor to all the rights and privileges of the head of the lamasery over which its predecessor reigned.

The spirit of the *Khomba Lama* is bound by no known laws in its transmigration, but seems to enter into whatever body it will. On this account some difficulty occasionally arises in the discovery of the body into which it has newly entered. The search, however, being among the duties which fall to the priests to perform, always terminates successfully. The surviving spirit is found by some infallible marks known to the priests alone, and most commonly in the body of an infant newly born, which is now taken to the palace of its predecessor and brought up and educated in all the mysteries of the faith. But sometimes it happens, that the spirit of the ever-living lama is found to have taken possession of a grown-up body, the accommodating spirit of which enters the body of some infant just about to be born. In this case, as

s at all times found among the sacerdotal orders of the people, the new *Khomba Lama* enters at once upon the performance of all the functions of his office, which he continues to administer until this habitation is worn out and dies also, and so on, until the end of time.

After passing the new town of Selenginsk, we left the river, and ascended some gentle slopes, which form the base of a ridge of high hills, that run nearly north and south, and divide the River Selenga from the Lake Goosimeer, which lay directly in our path, and which it was necessary to cross to attain the object of our journey. The country was here totally destitute of trees or shrubs; but the ground seemed to be entirely covered with the remains of a wild coarse grass which the paucity of the snow left often visible, and which sometimes obstructed our accustomed rapid pace. There was neither road nor track of any kind; and we had been four hours upon our journey, without observing the sign of the existence of any population when we attained the summit of this range of hills. We had now before us a more extensive and more picturesque view than any I had seen since descending the mountains that divide Europe from Asia. The nearer objects of the vast landscape were some inferior hills beneath us, which formed great steps in the descent to the lake above mentioned. The surface of the lake presented at this distance a mottled appearance. Upon the opposite shores appeared a varied country of white hills and vales, which the sun, still low in the heavens behind us, exhibited in as many shades and forms as it might have presented, if vegetation had covered all the inequalities of the ground; but towards the north, the lake was seen stretching out beyond the compass of the view.

We halted here for a few minutes to enjoy the exciting prospect. There were no habitations visible

from this altitude. But we had not proceeded far in our descent, before our *yemstchik*, who was a Bouriat, pointed out to us the sacred village in which the *Khomba Lama* of his race resided, which was seen now like a small dark spot of ground that was difficult to distinguish amidst the wild wastes, and at the foot of other hills upon the opposite side of the lake.

As we continued to descend the trackless way, we had upon our left hand sometimes valleys and sometimes deep ravines, by the precipices of which the skilful Bouriat conducted us with a confidence that admitted no doubts of his knowledge of the country; and upon our right we had varied slopes and inferior hills. But we were generally able to keep at full gallop during the descent, until we gained the banks of the lake.

We now took the ice near the southern extremity of this noble sheet of water, which, from the time we were crossing, we judged to be about twelve versts in breadth, and I subsequently learned that it extends from the place at which we crossed it, in the northerly direction, to a distance of about twenty-two versts.

The Lake Goosimeer differs as much from the Baikal in the character of the scenery that surrounds it, as in the extent of its waters. In place of the view which the traveller obtains from the surface of the Baikal, of grand, rugged, steep, dark, and irregular mountains, sometimes spotted with fir-trees, from the surface of the Goosimeer, at this season, we see on all sides the white hills of a snow-clad but gently waving country, without a spot upon any of its declivities to indicate the existence of the most spare vegetation.

We found the mottled appearance of the surface of the lake which we had observed from the hills, to be caused by patches of snow at regular distances with black ice intervening. The snow in some places, indeed,

was deep; but we had three fine horses and a light *sani*, and we arrived while it was yet early in the day, at the opposite banks of the lake, where we were now within three versts of the holy village.

We had learned before our departure from Selenginsk, that a long time had passed since the last European visited the Siberian *Khomba Lama*, and we were consequently prepared for our appearance causing some little sensation among the inhabitants of the holy place. We were not likely therefore to be frightened out of our propriety by any attentions or honours we might chance to receive on the occasion.

As we approached the village, and whilst yet upon the open ground, we perceived (for the houses were wide apart and not placed to form streets) just such a stir among the people as a bird's-eye view of the interior of a fortified town might discover, when the enemy was advancing unexpectedly to storm it. Some were seen running in one direction, and some in another; and the greater part of those who seemed in the most haste, were dressed in flowing red robes. But as we drove up in an open place which seemed near the centre of the village, we were met by fifty or sixty men, besides some women, and some children of both sexes. Several of the men were dressed in the ordinary costume of the Bouriat peasants, but the greater part in the red robe. They all took off their caps to salute us as we pulled up, but it was difficult to say whether their countenances expressed most curiosity or welcome. We chose, however, to consider our reception as a hearty welcome, and after acknowledging their salutation by also uncovering, we made a few necessary inquiries.

Our Bouriat *yemstchik*, who had been selected to conduct us by the *Gorodnichii* of Selenginsk, on account of his being able to speak a little of the Russian language, which the obliging official thought might enable

us to make some use of him as an interpreter, in case we should find no better on our arrival at Souggin, although he had, we were quite sure, been in the holy village of his race before, seemed not to know whereabout the *Khomba Lama* dwelt. This appeared to us rather strange, until our introduction to the holy man, when it was explained, as we shall presently see. However, we no sooner made known to those around us to whom our visit was intended, than several of them offered their services at once to bring us to the dwelling of their religious chief.

The proper lamasery here comprises the grand temple in which the principal idol of the Buddhists, or the representative of their supreme deity, sits with some attendant deities, to receive the adoration and prayers of his worshippers, and several smaller temples, and the *Khomba Lama's* dwelling, all of which are entirely surrounded by pallisades.

The proper front of the *Khomba Lama's* dwelling faces the lake, and has a spacious court before it, the great gates of which open upon the plain between the village and the lake.

At these gates we now drew up. We found here a numerous troop of the sacred order, in their red robes, already in attendance to receive us. But while we were disencumbering ourselves of our sledge-coverings, and alighting, which is not like jumping from a summer carriage, several of those who came to receive us were earnest in their inquiries of the *yemstchik* who the strangers were, to which our conductor replied, as he had been especially instructed, "a foreigner and his interpreter with the Russians, come from a far country, and who, while travelling in this part of Siberia, would not willingly omit paying a complimentary visit to the chief among its aboriginal inhabitants."

This appeared quite enough; and the priests or lamas

of the inferior grade, now formed a complete procession, in the midst of which they placed the strangers, and our Bouriat conductor and interpreter behind us; and in this order, we passed across a broad space between the walls of the great enclosure and the front of the *Khomba Lama's* dwelling.

As we approached the building, two unrobed attendants first mounted some steps which led to the entrance; and, as they now stood, each with the half of a double door in hand, the holy men who were before us in the procession formed a double line, through which we passed till we gained the door. All this was not, however, done without some confusion and scrambling, which doubtless proceeded from the want of practice in the ceremonies of receiving strangers of the importance which, it was already pretty clear, they had determined upon considering us to be.

We now gained the disrobing hall, as we will call the anteroom, which is between the doors that open upon the court and the inhabited apartments, still attended by a part of the persons of the procession. Here the two unrobed attendants performed the same duty as the Russian servants are wont to perform for strangers, in disembarrassing us of our furs before we entered the apartments within. This performed, which is not the work of a mere moment with a winter traveller in Siberia, we were led to another apartment, at the upper end of which sat two lamas, in Eastern fashion, upon a carpet spread upon the ground, with each a large book under his left arm. One of them was extremely fat, and rather tall; and, as I had heard a report of the uncommon corporeal dimensions of the *Khomba Lama*, I concluded we were in his presence; and as they rose I made the Mussulman salaam, which the position of the lamas at the moment put into my head, by placing my right hand upon my breast, and afterwards upon my

forehead, which natural expression of feeling doubtless cannot, whether it be the custom or not with those among whom we travel, be easily misunderstood.

There was nothing here that seemed in any way commensurate with the ceremony with which we had been conducted thus far. The apartment was without any furniture, except the carpets upon which the lamas had been sitting, and a framed piece of writing hanging against one of the walls, and two chairs of European form. The lamas, now, by significant actions, which did not require that some words that accompanied them should be understood, insisted upon my being seated, while they themselves stood. Notwithstanding the sacred presence in which I thought we were, after a little hesitation, I felt compelled to yield, instead of bowing and scraping like a man of the city, and making excuses in a language which would not be understood, trusting to some quick explanation through our native interpreter. But upon turning to the Swiss, who was under better discipline at present than upon a former occasion, and was still standing, to desire him to make through our *yemstchik* some complimentary communication, I found we had lost our interpreter upon the way from the *sani*. The Bouriat's knowledge of the Russian tongue, indeed, was not very great; yet it had been calculated upon, and we had no one at hand to supply his place. I sent the Swiss, of course, immediately in search of him; and thus I found myself alone with the lamas, without the power of uttering an intelligible word, or perhaps of making a sign that might be understood. There did not, indeed, seem to be much disposition on the part of the holy men to talk, and I kept my seat, as we thus gazed at each other in silence, while about a dozen of the inferior lamas stood within and without the door, equally silent, and with countenances as serious as if the most important affairs were

about to be transacted. Our position was doubtless equally painful, and it endured too long. My two interpreters, however, at length made their appearance, and things took their natural course. But as it proved that it was alarm excited by excess of respect for the lamas on the part of our Bouriat interpreter that had caused him to absent himself, and the man was brought in as unwillingly as a criminal led to punishment, there was little to be expected from his aid.

The lamas now put the first question, which was the most natural one possible, inquiring the object of my visit; and the same answer was returned as that which had been before given to the inferior lamas. But we very soon found by what followed, that we were not yet in the presence of the *Khomba Lama* himself, but in that only of lamas of one of the several inferior grades of the order. It was now, also, equally apparent, that this interview was merely for the purpose of ascertaining truly the rank of their visitor, in order probably to enable the *Khomba Lama* to settle the ceremony of the introduction to his especial presence. A variety of questions, indeed, were asked, with evidently the same design, and during which especial allusions were made to commerce, until the answers seemed to satisfy these lamas that their visitor was not of the commercial order in his own country, which appeared to be conclusive that I must be of high rank, or I could neither have business, nor be permitted to travel, in another.

After the conversation, which seemed to end in these conclusions, a very little more discourse passed, before some disorder was perceived at the door of the apartment; and upon making inquiry, we found that a messenger was already on his way from the presence of the *Khomba Lama*, with some message for the strangers in his dwelling. Another minute, and the messenger entered; and it was communicated to us, that we were

invited to enter the especial apartment of their chief. The two inferior lamas with whom we had been conversing, now led the way, and we were soon in the sacred presence.

As we entered by a side door near one end of the apartment, the great oracle of the land, robed in crimson, appeared at the opposite end, seated upon a low divan, and attended on either side by several of his inferiors, and in front by others, who sat on the ground beneath him, while some were seated at eight or ten yards further removed around him. He rose as we entered, and the rest did the same; and we were now led to a short bench, covered with red cloth, near this end of the chamber, which brought us immediately opposite the sacred person and his peculiar retinue.

Nothing that I had heard of the *Khomba Lama's* dimensions had been exaggerated. I never before saw so monstrous a specimen of humanity. We have had our fat parsons, and many nations have had their fatter still. But the *Khomba Lama*, although, as I learned afterwards, only thirty-three years of age, was at once the tallest, the stoutest, and the fattest, and at the same time the most deformed in feature, of all men I ever beheld. Yet in spite of this latter defect, which seemed rather the consequence of his fatness than nature's original blemish, there was evidently a predominance of benevolence in his expression, which made his countenance even agreeable when he spoke.

The *Khomba Lama* made a sign that I should be seated, which I obeyed, as he seated himself, and the Swiss continued standing by my side. But when the moment seemed arrived for some mutual interchange of thought, we found our Bouriat had again deserted us, not having been able, as it appeared, to gain courage to stand in the dread presence of the *Khomba Lama*, notwithstanding some efforts that had been made to

strengthen his confidence, as we afterwards heard, by the lamas, with whom we had the first interview, after they had witnessed the poor man's confusion.

The Swiss now went once more in search of the lost man, and I was again left as before; and as some time elapsed before the recovery of the only means of intercourse with the lamas which it was possible to obtain, it afforded me the opportunity of making a leisure survey of this especial apartment of the Grand Lama.

The side upon the right, and opposite the door at which we had entered, seemed to be sacred to religious purposes. A portion of the apartment was here railed in, and contained numerous statues, which were seated in the Eastern fashion, amidst gaudy appendages to the rites of the worship they doubtless enjoy, consisting, it appeared, chiefly of artificial flowers and shrubs. There were also radiant suns or stars, whether mere ornaments or emblems of objects of worship, our limited means of intercourse did not afterwards afford us an opportunity of ascertaining. The rest of the apartment was sufficiently in keeping with the more brilliant and more sacred portion. But the living scene was the most striking to the stranger. The lamas, grouped around their chief, presented the most picturesque appearance imaginable. I observed, also, at this moment, what I had not noticed before, that all, except the chief, were barefoot. But the fact of the exception, coupled with the circumstance that we had no hint given us to cast off our shoes, seemed conclusive that the mark of respect on the part of the inferior lamas was for the *Khomba Lama*, and not towards the worthy deities in whose presence we seemed to sit.

The Swiss at length arrived a second time with his captive, and he again took his station by my side, and the desired intercourse seemed ready to commence. We were not yet so far advanced, however;

for our simple interpreter was now so overawed in the presence of the immortal chief of his religion, and trembled and stuttered in such a manner when he attempted to speak, that he was wholly unable to utter intelligibly a single word of a short speech that he was desired to convey to the ear of the *Khomba Lama*, as a commencement of our anticipated discourse.

I never before saw man so awed by man. Fortunately, however, our new embarrassment was not of long duration; for, from among the crowd about the door, a more confident Bouriat, who had also more of the Russian tongue than our *yemstchik*, stepped forward and offered his services, and the discourse now properly began.

Rejoiced at our new position, I did not wait for any question from the *Khomba Lama*, but desired that he might be in the first instance told, that the fame of his patriarchal care of so many subjects of a sovereign in alliance with my own sovereign, had induced me to pay him a complimentary visit.

This was of course spoken to the Swiss, who repeated it in the Russian tongue to our new interpreter, through whom it reached the ear of the *Khomba Lama*, most certainly without any curtailment in the number of the words, but how correctly or incorrectly we could not of course form any idea. When the *Khomba Lama* seemed, however, to understand what was said, he in return expressed his gratification, as it reached my ear through the same channel of interpretation, at seeing and conversing with a foreigner, and the subject of a sovereign in alliance with the great emperor; and he desired, at the same time, that I might be asked the name of my country, and its distance from Siberia.

The questions with which this communication from the *Khomba Lama* concluded, were of course, as plainly answered as possible; and it seemed that the answers

were the more intelligible to the holy man, on account of the English name having reached his ears in connection with that of the Chinese. It might have been supposed, indeed, at this step in our discourse, that it was only in company with that of his near neighbours that he had ever heard it pronounced, and then only in reports that had been brought by Bouriats who had heard from the merchants who visit Kiachta of the late wars between the Chinese and the English. Nevertheless, though this communication conveyed this impression, we had reason to believe, as the discourse advanced, that what had been said proceeded from the desire on the part of the *Khomba Lama* that he might rather be supposed to entertain within the chambers of his palace an enemy to the Chinese than an enemy to his spiritual dominion, which it was quite natural that he should deem the countryman of the missionaries above mentioned.

The *Khomba Lama* seemed, indeed, to think, as the difficult discourse advanced, that we were the near neighbours of the "Celestials." But when he was informed of the actual distance between England and China, and in addition to this, that the two people had no intercourse with each other by a nearer route than a four or five months' voyage, he expressed himself unable to understand what cause of war could arise between two nations at such an immense distance from each other.

The subject of the discourse now changed, by the *Khomba Lama* asking some questions about our sovereign; and, after he had heard that the British sovereign was of the gentler sex, he caused several questions to be put, which all seemed to proceed from a desire to know the means by which our government was carried on. To these I replied in such a manner as I thought might be most easily comprehended by one who it was impossible should understand the simplest

elements of a government that is an enigma and a mystery to every nation that is not the offspring of the same mother of liberty, order, and equal laws. I informed him merely, that the whole people among us, through their representatives, elective and hereditary, made the laws, and that the sovereign, with the aid of councillors, interpreted their intent, and enforced obedience to them. To this he seemed to have nothing to remark, save to express his surprise that a woman, and so young, should reign over a country that could make war upon the great Chinese empire.

I was unwilling to ask any question that might seem to indicate too great curiosity concerning the religion of the Bouriats, lest it should awaken any sleeping prejudice that might be entertained by the *Khomba Lama* against the English, on account of the mission just alluded to, or cause suspicion that I might be the secret agent of others who had some recondite design upon his spiritual dominion. The subject, however, came up; and as I could, as it proceeded, discover no such feeling lurking beneath the kindly expressions that reached my ear, I gladly took the opportunity afforded me, during our discourse, of expressing even an unfavourable opinion of that mission, both because I sincerely entertained it, for reasons I will afterwards state, and because I believed that this would lead him to make some observations upon this subject which I should like to hear. I was willing, however, to let the lama lead the discourse, if he would; and he now caused me to be asked, whether we had a Grand Lama to preside over all spiritual affairs, like the spiritual sovereign of the faithful of his religion, who resided at the holy city of Llassa.

To this question I replied, that our temporal sovereign and our *Khomba Lama*, which were one and the same person, answered in some measure to the great spiritual head of his religion, within the proper country

of Tibet; but that the British *Khomba Lama* might more appropriately be compared to the temporal sovereign of all his own fellow-subjects, as both these European sovereigns were temporal heads of the entire nations which they governed, and spiritual heads of the more important portion of them. I added, however, that our *Khomba Lama* was not much troubled with the details of spiritual matters, having, like his own great chief, as well as the Russian Sovereign, plenty of willing aids in the labour.

There were many questions and answers passed after this. But if the answers to questions put by the *Khomba Lama* reached the holy man's ear in intelligible language, but few at least of those that I received in reply to questions which I caused to be put to him, came to me with this advantage. One other, however, of the questions at least which he put, reached my ear in such concise and particularly clear language, that it is probable the reply to it did not suffer much change in its transmission. The question was perhaps an indirect allusion to the English mission, of which I was anxious to hear his opinion. He requested that he might be informed, whether I was acquainted with the opinions of the Grand Lama of my country concerning himself and his people. And in reply to this, I caused him to be told, that I had not been fortunate enough to hear any thing of our sovereign's opinion upon this subject; but that this was no proof that himself and his people might not be very well known to the British Queen, and be even especial objects of her interest. This seemed, in whatever dress it may indeed have reached the *Khomba Lama's* ear, as if it caused some degree of disappointment. But lest the reputation of the British sovereign for just tolerance should suffer in his opinion, I thought it proper here to inform him that our *Khomba Lama* had under her

government, men of more religious faiths than even the great Russian Lama and Emperor, and, what I thought would interest him most, that she had a greater number of subjects of his own faith by many millions, than the great Emperor of the West had, and that she distributed equal justice towards all of them, though many in her distant dominions were of creeds far indeed less like her own than that of the people over whom he presided.

Some short communications that came to me after this, left an impression on my mind, that it was the opinion of the *Khomba Lama* that all religions were good, when the men themselves were virtuous. From this I was led to believe that he considered them all to be but mere engines of government, or that there were two or more creators and superintendents of divided portions of the universe, who were independent in their actions, and had severally formed different races of men, from whom they exacted their particular dues in especial forms of worship which they had arranged to suit their particular tastes.

And now, as I thought the *Khomba Lama's* patience might be a little strained, I requested that I might have permission to see the principal temple of the lamasery, which was with evident willingness immediately given. So taking leave, for the present, of the immortal Buddhist, we proceeded, with our last enlisted interpreter, accompanied by three or four of the inferior lamas, to inspect the sacred edifice.

Upon descending to the court which we had crossed before entering the dwelling of the *Khomba Lama*, we observed a wigwam of large dimensions, which had before escaped our notice; and upon inquiry we found that it was the summer residence of the *Khomba Lama*, and that it was inhabited by him at that season, for the purpose of preserving a due respect among his people

for their ancient usages, which, in their modes of life, had been much changed since they became a part of the Russian people. The wigwam was formed of felt, and was about seven feet high, and without any aperture apparent at the top, and very plain without. We entered it for a moment, and found the interior handsomely decorated in a similar style to, but with more simplicity than, the apartment of the *Khomba Lama* in which we had just had our interview.

## CHAP. X.

### VISIT TO SOUGGIRA—*continued.*

The Buddhist Religion.—Origin of Buddhism.—Brahmins.—Manifestations of the Supreme Deity.—Reviviscence of the Lamas.—Proper Creed of the Buddhist.—Corruptions introduced by the Priests.—Moral Tendency of the Belief in Transmigration of Souls.—Mythology of Buddhism.—Allegories.—Purity of the Moral Code.—The Religion adapted to the Genius of the People.—Compared to Mohammedanism.—No Hell.—Effects of their Religion on the Characters of Men.—Humanity.—Occupation of the Lamas.—Frugality of the Lamas.—Severity of the Rules.—Reasons against the Use of Tobacco.—Temples of the Lamasery.—Interior of the chief Temple.—Worship of the Lamas.—Hymns.—Music.—Decorations of the Temple.—Instruments.—The Idol Jugamonane.—Examination of the Symbols of Worship.—Sacred Writings within the Temple.—Character of the Worship.—Opinion concerning idolatrous Worship generally.—Impressions of Virtue and Vice among Men in a rude State of Society.—New Regulation of Missionary Labours important.—Suggestions for other Means of introducing Civilisation.—Advantage to be taken of our Knowledge of the Occupations of the Lamas.—Obstacles surmountable.—Impolicy of overthrowing established Institutions before others can be substituted.—Taking leave of the Lama.—Return to Selenginsk.

Before we enter the principal temple of the Buddhists in Siberia, it will be as well to recur to such few points of this remarkable religion as are best known beyond the circle of those initiated in its mysteries, and acquainted with its secret history. The dullest of mortal men could not enter one of the temples of this great religious community, and remain wholly indifferent concerning the origin and character of the rites of worship herein performed. The origin, indeed, of

Buddhism does not seem to be with certainty determined by the learned men either of the East or the West. Nevertheless, the concurrent traditions among the more enlightened of the Buddhist communities, seem to fix the date of its commencement at about the year 1010 before the Christian era, and to agree that its founder was the son of Suddodana, King of Mogdha, in South Behar and Maija. That it first arose in India, little doubt can be entertained, from the circumstance that all the Buddhists, in whatever countries they are found, agree in regarding the Sanscrit, which is the sacred language of the Brahmins and the root of the numerous tongues now spoken in India, to be that in which their religion was first promulgated. To the proper Hindoos, therefore, we should first turn, to see how their accounts in general agree with those entertained by the Buddhists themselves throughout the vast countries and provinces in which they are found.

The supreme deity of the Hindoos, whom we must first mention, following the religious history of that people, appears to be identified in the unity of three not very concordant intelligences, by mysteries which, though inexplicable to our understandings, are doubtless, like all the apparent obscurities in the religions of semi-barbarous people, perfectly intelligible to those who perform the rites that belong to them. The worthy triad consists of Brahma, the Creator, Vishnou, the Preserver, and Siva, the Destroyer of the universe, which, when all united, form Brahme, their supreme *Numen*. Now Vishnou, it is said, took upon himself the likeness of humanity, and appeared in the person of Buddha, said by the Buddhists to have been of the royal line above mentioned, and seduced millions of the faithful, who formerly acknowledged the triad, to the worship of his own particular person. His followers were, however, persecuted by the true

Brahmins, who drove the greater part of them out of India, by which their religion became spread through the vast countries where it now prevails.

The institution of the grand head of the religion, the *Dalai Lama* of Llassa in Tibet, appears to have originated in the credit acquired by a series of saintly persons, the last of whom was called Takyasinka, which indeed is he whose reviviscence from time to time has continued the line down to the present day. In the meantime, it is not deemed any inconsistency that this spiritual essence should inhabit several bodies, even in several countries, simultaneously. Not only, therefore, does the second Lama in rank, who is called Bouchan, but also all the vicegerents of these two great lamas, who are settled in various countries, enjoy this advantage. These are properly called Koutonktous, and the *Khomba Lama*, from whose presence we have just retired, is one of them.

Whatever may have been the origin, and whatever may be at this time the true character of Buddhism, it is certain that it is now spread over a populous and vast tract of country in China Proper, Tibet, and Mongolia; and it is probable that it is professed by a greater number of the human race than any other religion that exists in the world.* In its proper constitution it proclaims one Supreme Being possessed of many attributes, who may be represented in a great variety of forms. Man it declares to be an accountable being, who will live in a state hereafter in which his condition will be commensurate with the good or evil that was predominant in his character, during his existence on

* Hassell's estimate of the numbers of the professors of the several most widely-spread religions of the world, is as follows:—120,000,000 of Christians, including all sects; 4,000,000 Jews; 252,000,000 Mahommedans; 111,000,000 Brahmins; 315,000,000 Buddhists.

earth. Its written precepts for the guide of life are known to be highly moral and consonant to reason. But, just as happens in many other religions of the world, that which seems to have been calculated to produce the most refined state of society, has been so corrupted, that in most of the countries in which it prevails, it probably now retains but an inconsiderable portion of its original and proper character. The priests, by arts common to their order in all countries, in a dark age, have contrived to fill the whole system with metaphysical subtleties and incomprehensible mysteries, of which they alone are the interpreters. By this means they have obtained the credit for infallibility, and a consequent power, not only in spiritual but also in temporal affairs, which has led to the introduction of institutions, and even articles of faith, which have much changed the character of the religion, and checked its better influence upon the life and manners of the millions who profess it at this day.

One of the most remarkable, but at the same time perhaps harmless, if not even highly moral in its tendency, among the tenets of this religion, as it exists at the present day, is the doctrine of the transmigration of the vital essence of all creatures. The spirit of every animate being is believed to be an emanation from the essence of Buddha, which submits to a variety of transformations, until it attains the perfection of its nature through some appointed means, when it is reunited without losing its individuality with the eternal and universal essence from which it proceeded.

The moral tendency of this article of the Buddhist faith is most manifest from the incentive to a virtuous life of which it is found to be productive; for it is the great aim of every reflecting Buddhist to escape further transmigration, and to attain at the end of this life the final object of his existence.

The mythology, also, which belongs to the religion, is said to be full of allegories of a very moral cast, mingled with the wildest dreams and grossest absurdities. Nevertheless, all the rites and offices by which it is characterised, are known to be free from the sanguinary and impure observances of several of the religions of Asia, as well as from the worship of the ferocious and obscene deities which is common to many.

The proper moral code of the Buddhists inculcates, indeed, a life of peace and purity, such as no men of any age or country or religion have ever attained. But if we were to point to any one virtue by which this religion is characterised and distinguished above any other with which it can be classed or compared, we should dwell upon the known practical humanity which it has engendered, by which the lives of its adherents have been regulated, and their manners abundantly modified. But if it were necessary to go further and ask, whence this relief, which seems to shine like a glimmering light amidst a labyrinth of darkness, we should say that it can proceed from none other than a happy circumstance in their faith, which has tended, by the cheerful prospect of futurity which it affords, to impress an image of the supreme Deity upon their minds, of which this is the natural result. Let us, for the sake of seeing more clearly this particular phase of the religion, compare, in this one instance, the impressions which its adherents imbibe, with those entertained by the Moslems, who are by no means without the same virtue which we seem to find predominant among the Buddhists.

According to the faith of the Buddhists, at the final consummation of all the works of the Deity, man, his greatest work, will have attained the ultimate end of his existence, and the perfection of his nature, and will

dwell now for ever in a state of happiness and repose. According to the Moslem, at the day of final account, those who have been virtuous in this life are introduced into a new paradise where every sensual enjoyment awaits them; but, the far greater portion of the human race find abodes prepared for their habitation, where they will have "garments of fire fitted unto them," and where they will burn in unquenchable fire for ever. Now, if the religion of Asia in which the least superstition is found, and which is even based upon that of Europe and of civilised man, can present such a picture of the end of our species, and of the final consummation of the works of the Creator, can we wonder, when we see the contrast in that which we are contemplating, or doubt whence proceeds the remarkable relief which we have seen amidst its many errors and superstitions? No such place exists in the creation of Buddha as that which disfigures the religion of the Mahommedans, and adds to the attributes of the Omnipotent the worst of the passions of men with their evil consequences reflected upon human character. In a word, this religion seems to be in almost every respect, the best that has ever been invented by man, and has remained unmixed with Judaism and Christianity.

The priests or lamas of the Buddhists are very numerous. But the sacerdotal order in general, and the institutions which regulate their lives, are not among the best features of this religion. In particular districts they are congregated, as before mentioned, in religious houses or lamaseries, where prayer is their chief occupation, much in the same manner as in Christian countries still possessing the mediæval religious institutions which even Romish Spain, however ignorant and demoralised may be her clergy, has set them the example of abolishing. There are also to be found in some parts of those countries where the Buddhist

religion is predominant, certain lamas who retire to caverns in the heights of the mountains or in the deepest ravines, where they devote their lives to contemplation, and practise much the same severities that were formerly so common among Christians.

Nevertheless, the organisation of the system of the Buddhists is in many respects adapted to the genius, and agreeable to the wants, of the people in the state of society in which the Bouriats are found. The lamas in the direction of their studies, and in relation to their avocations, are divided into four classes or sections. Those of the first are chiefly occupied with the study of doctrinal affairs, and with the abstruse tenets and mysteries of their faith, which are at any rate sufficiently deep and intricate to secure those who engage in the study of them from *ennui*. Those of the second are occupied with the regulations and conduct of all that concerns the rites and ceremonies of their religion. Those of the third occupy themselves in the study and direction of their worship. But it is those of the fourth section that are the most calculated to excite our interest. Not only do they by their pursuits best supply the immediate wants of society, but they seem even, as we shall presently endeavour to show, to hold in their hands the very key of the gate at which the genius of civilisation, in a different form from that in which she has been hitherto presented to the Eastern nations, may find her ultimate entrance into Asia. Their occupation is the study and practice of medicine; and they are said to consult all such medical books as the libraries of China and Tibet afford. Moreover, those who reside in Siberia are known to practise very successfully, but more especially during any times of alarm proceeding from the dread or the prevalence of epidemic diseases.

Neither are the ordinary employments of the industrious class among all men in a state of society considered above

the dignity of the lamas; and many of them occupy themselves in the various branches of industry, but more particularly in the manufacture of their own wearing apparel, and the furniture and other necessaries for the use of the lamasery.

The rules of the lamasery are very strict concerning the regulations of the table, and the habits of life of the lamas. The use of spirits is strictly forbidden them, lest excess, as it is declared, should disorder the brain of the student of the divine oracles, and corrupt the heart by the bad passions which it might engender. The use of tobacco is also denied them, and certainly for the very best of reasons that have ever been given against the practice of smoking: because, they say, it is conducive to indolence, and tends to waste the hours which we are able to spare from the serious occupations of life, which ought by every rational being to be devoted to some pursuit which affords as well instruction as amusement. The celibacy of the sacerdotal order is also partially enjoined.

The chief temple of the lamasery of Souggira is placed in the centre of the upper side of a great square within the enclosure before mentioned, opposed to the plain exterior of the back of the *Khomba Lama's* dwelling. It resembles exteriorly a one-story pagoda, and is made the more imposing by the two sides of the square being formed by eight or ten smaller temples of similar construction placed at equal distances from one another. All the temples have raised colonnades around them, with flights of steps leading to their entrances. The grand temple has in front of it two flights of steps covered by a verandah, and an ample estrade before the principal entrance.

As we appeared at this entrance, one of our red-robed attendants opened a little door in a pair of folding gates, through which we now entered the building,

where we found ourselves at once in the midst of one of the most striking and imposing scenes that may be anywhere beheld; and not more so from its novelty, than from the imposing effect of several hundreds of the red-robed children of the faith seated amidst the gay and grave symbols of their religion, and engaged in the solemn rites of adoration and prayer.

The interior of the temple is wholly seen at one view. Upon either side, in positions nearer to the centre of the building than to the side walls, slight columns support the roof. A shallow recess appears in each of these walls, at equal distances from either end; and there is a receding from the right line of the wall at the end opposed to that at which we entered, similar to what is commonly seen in our Christian edifices. From the roof above the nave, and from cords which passed across the centre from the capitals of the columns on one side, to those on the other, and from the cornices, in the same manner, hung countless ornaments, consisting chiefly of flags, pendants, and artificial flowers. The spaces between the line of the columns and the side walls were filled with benches rising one above another: and these, as we entered, were crowded with lamas in their red robes, seated in the Eastern attitude with their faces towards the nave of the edifice: and before the front row were suspended various instruments of music, among which the Chinese gong was the most conspicuous. But after contemplating this dazzling show for a short time, our eyes rested upon the plain object of the adoration of the lamas, seated amidst the parade of worship, in calm repose, in the centre of the recess at the extremity of the building.

The interpreter now desired that we would advance directly up the decorated nave. Fearful, however, of disturbing the devotions of the worshippers, I requested that he would lead us round by the walls. But the

motive for the request being apparent to the Bouriat, he assured us that our appearance would have no such effect, and that there existed no reason why we should not advance directly up the centre; and as he led the way, we followed.

All was yet silent, and I confess, that the solemn act of adoration which we now witnessed, unaccompanied by the least sound or motion, had already excited my sympathies and deepest interest. But, as in creeping our way, we had very nearly arrived at the upper end of the nave, the lamas, as if our presence had suddenly touched some string that awakened them from their state of mute contemplation, commenced a hymn, accompanied by several wind-instruments, which produced an entrancing effect. Presently, however, the gong, tambourine, and other noisy instruments suspended from the roof, were beaten by some half-dozen of the lamas on either side, in harmony nevertheless with the vocal and less noisy instrumental sounds. And such an uproar as now ensued, I confess I never before heard in conjunction with harmony. Nay, if ever molten image or matter formed by the hand of man into an object of worship be made to hear, the Bouriats cannot fail to make their placid deity at Souggira at least sensible of their adorations.

We inquired what was the character of, and proper incentive to, this worship at this time, and were answered, that the worshippers asked a blessing upon all their undertakings, health to themselves and their cattle, and the perpetual aid of Jugamonane, the particular personification of the deity that presided in their temple.

We now arrived near the recess in which Jugamonane sat amidst the same alternate silence and loud bursts of music and song. Two lamas of superior order sat on either side the recess with their faces turned towards the

body of the temple; and inferior deities on both sides supported the great Jugamonane as he sat unmoved amidst the din, the seeming auditor and spectator of the pomp and circumstance of his worship. These superior lamas held in the hand each a tambourine, about which hung objects which, when the frame was shaken, performed the office of the hand in our larger instruments of the same kind. They at least a little aided the effects of the noise.

No one interfered with us, while we examined all the immediate symbolical objects, and inferior deities which are placed about their calm superior. But while we were contemplating the still repose of the seated Jugamonane, and were thoughtful and giddy amidst the exhibition, and almost expecting to see the idol nod assent to the loud petitions of our fellow-men, our guide bade me touch the image, which we could just reach. When I observed the little reverence which he seemed to have for this deity, I was under the impression that he must be a Christian. This, however, was not the case; and, upon a second invitation, I placed my hand upon the knee of the idol, merely out of curiosity to discover the cause of the invitation so to do, when I perceived by the countenances of the two lamas that were with us, that the act rather pleased than shocked them.

The temple is not without its sacred writings, also. We did not see any books; but we possibly overlooked some, perhaps confounded with the showy objects that surrounded the idol. But upon making the tour of the building, we found in the side recesses above mentioned, large framed manuscript writings suspended from the walls, some of which appeared old, and others new. These, the guide informed us, consisted of passages from their sacred writings in the Sanscrit tongue.

Before we came out of the temple, I caused several questions to be put to our intelligent guide and inter-

preter, calculated to discover, if it were possible, the true character of the idolatrous worship which we appeared to see; and what we heard from him, and all we saw, left on my mind the impression, that the adoration performed by these lamas, whatever may be done in other countries, approached no nearer to direct idolatry than the belief, that the statue in the presence of which they bowed, in representing or standing more properly in the place of, the Supreme Deity, gave them more lively impressions of his attributes and his perfections than they were able abstractedly or without such aid to entertain.

"Buddha," said indeed our informant, very plainly, "delights to be adored in a visible form, and Jugamonane is one of the personifications in which he is most pleased to be represented, because he is herein figured especially as the patron of benevolence and all the calmer virtues." It was impossible to believe that the orisons of these lamas were mingled with any thing that indicated that they believed that matter which themselves had moulded into form, could will, or do them either evil or good.

The fervour and emotion which accompany the petitions and adorations of those who bend the knee with grateful hearts before Him to whom they owe their being, or from whom they hope to obtain forgiveness for their offences, it is well known, in particular instances even among some sects of our own religion, lead at least to a temporary belief that the figure which the hands of men have formed, and to which the power of the chisel or the pencil has given the close semblance of intelligence, is conscious of their good or evil actions, and is able to reward or punish them at pleasure. But this seems to me little more than our impressions when we read poetry and romance. Who is there in whom the passion of terror has been excited by the scenes which

exhibit the fallen angels cast into the abyss of liquid fire, and end with the recovery of Satan from his first stupor, that has not seemed to hear the very sound of the voice that

> "Called so loud, that all the hollow deep
> Of hell resounded?"

And yet we no sooner desist from indulging in the contemplation of the images of the poet's imagination, than a higher faculty of the mind than that which we have been exercising, tells us that what we have for a season believed is not real. Let us at least hope that none of our species, however rude, are without a consciousness superior to what might indeed give us strange ideas of so large a portion of mankind.

It is worthy of remark, that among men in the most primitive condition, and amidst the rudest conceptions of the Deity, we find many moral feelings and impressions of virtue and vice, more in accordance with what we know to be true and most acceptable to the Creator, than we find generally among men in the intermediate stages between that of the savage, and that of man in the state of society that we usually call civilised. Thus it becomes of importance to discover, whether there are any means of giving men in the condition of the Bouriats any other religious knowledge, than that which they possess, without rendering the latter portion of their original impressions less distinct, and destroying the very foundation upon which their moral conduct and all their obligations to society rest.

Wherever men, indeed, are found almost without social institutions, and with the grossest impression conceivable concerning the Deity, no doubt can be entertained of the obligation or of the success of missionary labours. And in all such cases, the simple method of the Moravians, which embraces chiefly the moral of

religion and its history, and which has been so successful with the Negroes in our West India colonies, might perhaps be the speediest and surest means to the end that none can deny to be most desirable to attain.

It appears to me, however, in relation to Central Asia, that there is a more certain means than the labours of missionaries, for the introduction of the religion of civilised man even into the heart of the country; and this means is, the promulgation of a knowledge of the most useful arts of civilised life, together with the elements of natural science.

These very words indeed thus employed may seem like empty sounds. But let us suppose, that even the missionaries above spoken of, as soon as they had completed the grammars and dictionaries of the Mongolian tongue, had begun to teach their scholars the means of acquiring knowledge—that is, writing, reading, and the use of figures—and that they had followed this up by the elements of such knowledge as tends most to benefit the condition, or excite the curiosity of men. We have seen how even the lamas are occupied, and that their sacred duties do not prevent them following the ordinary avocations of the industrious classes among all men in a state of society. And does not this circumstance suggest to every one who considers it, that a door here stands wide open for introducing into the villages of the lamaseries men acquainted with the arts best adapted to civilise and refine the people, even throughout the vast Buddhist empire?

The jealousy of the sacerdotal order, naturally the strongest obstacle to vanquish in all attempts to introduce a new religion among any people whatsoever, would not be excited by measures taken to accomplish this object, or would cede to their material interests. What obstacle, for instance, can it be supposed would be put in the

way of the agriculturist who would double the crops of the land? What opposition can we anticipate would be offered to the introduction of gardening, as one of the fine, as well as useful arts? And above all, in what corner under heaven has the art of medicine found any opposition to its introduction, save when it has been in the hands of men who have degraded their profession by suffering avarice to predominate over every other passion they possess? Men who should carry these immediately apparent boons with them, and among whom would appear none of those disputes and denial of each other which are found among missionaries of opposite sects, could not fail to gain a degree of respect and obtain an ascendency that would throw education completely into their hands, and thus pave the way for the promulgation of the religion which the missionaries whose feelings are ever too strongly engaged in the prime object of their mission to act with coolness and deliberation, may never accomplish. The produce of the labours of the excellent men above mentioned is probably already placed upon the shelves of the British Museum among the curiosities of literature.

It was because I entertained these opinions, that I did not hesitate to express to the *Khomba Lama* an unfavourable opinion of the English mission.

I am quite aware that Chinese jealousy would be the great stumbling-block in the way of men engaged in any mission of this or any kind, in any part of Asia, in the remotest degree connected with China. But the Buddhists that we have seen, are in no way subject to the authority or influence of the Chinese, and there are many Buddhist nations equally independent of that peculiar people. We are only speaking, too, of a first step in a new career of adventure: the means and the moment for proceeding further would belong to the mission to discover.

It is my confirmed persuasion, that missions to countries where any religion is firmly established that is founded upon ancient scriptures which have maintained their credit, have contributed more to delay than advance the Christian cause. They have often excited the jealousy of the governing authorities, and thus acted, indeed, as a direct bar to such intercourse, at least, as we have supposed to be that alone adapted to civilise and Christianise the various races throughout the vast countries of Asia in particular. If the progress of Christianity were traced through the different countries in which it has been taught, beginning at Jerusalem, in company with the character of the efforts which have been made for its establishment, perhaps the above remarks would appear sufficiently well founded to excite an interest with some who might be powerful enough to effect such a change in the whole missionary system as would tend more speedily than we dare hope, to rescue a vast proportion of the human race from the state of degradation in which they are at present plunged.*

From the temple we returned to the palace, to take leave of the immortal lama. I now expressed to the holy man my great satisfaction at all we had seen, and at the consideration with which I had been treated. The *Khomba Lama* smiled benevolently as this communication was made to him. After this, in the same ceremonious manner in which our previous conversation

* Some years since, when the writer of these Travels was in Syria, a missionary presented him with a little book he had published entitled, "The Offices of the Holy Ghost; an Exposition of the Symbol, Water:" but the contents of which, he has to regret, he could not understand. Need any comment be made upon the means this good man had taken to convert the Mohammedans and Jews for whose instruction it was circulated?

had been carried on, he bade us a prosperous journey, and, last of all, requested that when I should see our English Grand Lama, I would present his best wishes for her happiness and the continued favour of her God.

I thanked him on behalf of my fellow-subjects, as well as on my own account, for his good wishes concerning our Sovereign; and I assured him, that should the British Queen at any time visit Siberia, I was confident she would pay him a visit; and moreover, I added, that in case of such a remarkable event, I was equally certain that our Queen would receive as much pleasure as himself from the interview.

We left Souggira immediately after this leave-taking on our return to Selenginsk. We reached the opposite side of the lake before the day closed. After re-ascending the hills we had before passed over, and during the first hours of the night before the moon rose, we had the opportunity of observing a remarkable exhibition of the Aurora Borealis. The whole of the northern hemisphere first appeared tinged with a deep dull light, similar in colour to red-hot iron shortly after it has been taken from the fire. This, however, soon spread in rays of brighter colour, which seemed to dart like sunbeams across the zenith, until the entire heavens, from the horizon on one side to that on the other, was covered with these beams of light in rapid and continual motion and change of shade and colour, of which I know nothing in nature that might afford a simile to convey any just idea. We arrived at our quarters at Selenginsk early on the following morning.

I cannot close this account of the Bouriats without mentioning, that before quitting the place, upon calling on the *gorodnichii*, to thank this obliging officer for his attentions during our stay in the capital of his district, I had the gratification of hearing from him a very favourable report concerning the morals and the

conduct generally of the people of this race within his jurisdiction.

We obtained some further information before leaving Selenginsk, concerning the inhabitants of the wide territory on this side the Baikal. We were informed that a people called the Soiyots, inhabit a district lying south-west of the great lake, within the boundary of Siberia, and that two other tribes inhabit the country south-west of the same lake, one of which was called the Narragassin, and the other the Goosimeer, after which the lake near Souggira has doubtless been named. These tribes have very little commerce with either the Russians or the Chinese. Little indeed seemed to be known concerning them, save that they lived entirely by hunting, and that they were without any thing worthy the name of religious or social institutions.

## CHAP XI.

### RETURN JOURNEY FROM SELENGINSK TO IRKOUTSK.

Departure from Selenginsk.—Inebriety of the Bouriat *Yemstchik.*—Detention.—Overthrow among the Ice.—Remedies for Inebriety.—*Yemstchik's* Face scalded by the Frost.—Reach Verchneoudinsk.—Second Passage of the Lake Baikal.—Curious Phenomenon in the Elongation of the Vision.—Views on Shore on approaching the Land.—Reach the N.W. Shore.—Tempest during our Coasting Journey.—Rest at a Station on the Coast.—Reach the Entrance of the Angara.—Appearance of the Rapids.—Superstitions of the Bouriats.—Arrival at Irkoutsk.

We left Selenginsk again, upon the morning of the day after that of our return from Souggira, on our direct way back to the capital of Eastern Siberia. We had now no moon during the first hours of the night; but the ice upon the river was smooth, and the light of the stars, which shone with their usual brilliancy, was sufficient, with the instinct of our cattle, to enable us to keep our wonted pace till our arrival at the first station.

Between the first and second station, when we had fortunately the light of the waning "white moon," in addition to that of the stars, we experienced some inconvenience and delay through the inebriety of our *yemstchik.* The house at the station where we had taken this fellow up, was full of Bouriats, all rioting in the full effects of the precious *vodka,* and not a sober man was to be found. It was highly important, however, that we should proceed; for we had so timed our departure from Selenginsk, that one night's delay would cause us

to reach the Baikal at an hour that would involve the loss of another. It is not prudent to launch upon the broad waters of that grand lake for a certain period of five hours, and perhaps seven or eight, after the day is too far spent to admit of completing the passage or getting a good sight of the opposite coast before dark; and, as every moment we delayed, unless we remained the night, confirmed more and more the condition of these desert rioters, we picked out the man that seemed to have the most reason remaining, and determined to make the best we could of him. We made a verst or two without any inconvenience; and although the ice now upon both sides of our track, was broken into masses that were lying about like loose granite rocks and stones, of all forms and all sizes under that of a haycock, there was no doubt of the ability of the horses to find their own way. But here our *yemstchik* began to nap, and pulling the reins as he nodded, he drew the more intelligent animals than himself off the track; and before either of the passengers had time to get possession of the reins, we were overthrown and tossed out, and our beds with us, among the masses of ice, amid which the horses had been driven. The only damage, however, was to the *sani*, and this was slight. But the accident might have caused us much more inconvenience than this, had not the drunken *yemstchik*, in spite of his condition, retained possession of the reins. And it is due to these companions of the traveller in Siberia to say, that this duty is generally performed so faithfully by them, that instances have been known where they have been dragged by their horses for several versts, at the risk of life, and during which they have received severe bodily injury, and yet have still retained hold of the reins, and saved the lives of those who have been so shut up in the *sani* as to have no means of escape. More contented, therefore, upon this

occasion, with our escape with sound limbs, than out of humour with our conductor, and believing the adventure had partly restored him to sobriety, we collected all our articles that lay strewed about upon the ice, and, when we had found the track, set off again at the usual speed.

We were deceived, however, with regard to the condition of our *yemstchik*, and, our position considered, I thought the circumstances justified the trial of a remedy for inebriety in usage in the country. I now watched the *yemstchik*, and every time he nodded, I rose up, and effectually roused him, not with a continental slap, but an English good thumping. It was to little purpose, however; for it was nothing but nodding and thumping, and going more or less off the track at every doze, and back again at every thump; so that it was plain, that without a better remedy, we should soon get another upset. Thus I now determined to try one I had found very effectual with a stubborn horse, by whose laziness I was once exposed to the danger of passing the night in the Canadian forest, without the provision against cold in use in Siberia. This had been substituting for the ineffectual whip, a spruce tree almost large enough for a shallop's mast, which I now resolved to use instead of the double fist; and having stopped where the bank of the river promised to supply our wants, a suitable tree was soon found, and as soon as cut down, and a little thinned of its superfluous foliage, we set it upright between us, at the same time warning the *yemstchik*, that it would fall upon his head every time he nodded or went off the track.

We went on very well after this for about half an hour, when we found it necessary to resort to the use of the tree, by the effects of the repeated blows from which we reached the next station without further accident.

Upon alighting here, however, we found the *yemstchik* had his face terribly burned with the frost, and his feet in a condition that made it plain that our spruce tree had saved him from losing them. I must not forget, however, to add, that he was not ungrateful for the service that we had rendered him in keeping him awake; and he thanked us very heartily for the beatings he had received, as soon as a cup or two of tea had sufficiently sobered him to admit of his being sensible of the obligations we had laid him under.

The next day before noon we reached Verchneoudinsk, where we left the river: and on the following evening, without further accident, we arrived again at the banks of the famous Baikal.

Our second passage across the great lake was as fortunate as the first. The day was as brilliant as those that had preceded it; and we had now the opportunity of witnessing a remarkable phenomenon, as it appeared to us, of which it is necessary to make particular mention.

As we launched upon the smooth surface of the ice, which was in the same condition as when we made the previous passage of the lake, the coast upon the opposite side was so distinctly visible, that we were under the apprehension that our *yemstchik* had changed our route, and that we were merely crossing an arm of the lake; and I could not be convinced of the contrary, until I had alighted, after we were two or three versts from the shore, and got out our compass and chart, and compared the bearings of the promontories of land within view.

It is impossible to exaggerate, in speaking of thi phenomenon. When we were scarce a verst from the land, having the sun at our backs, we were able to see the mountains upon the opposite coast, and the scanty dress in which nature has clothed them, as distinctly as

if we had not been five versts from their base, although we were near sixty. Instead of seeing only a faint blue shade, such as the French coast assumes, viewed from Dover Cliff, which is then at little more than a third of this distance from us, and where nothing is distinct but the outline against the lighter colour of the sky, we could here, not only distinguish the shades that marked the form of the mountains, caused by the valleys and inequalities of the ground, but even the dark firs, as they singly stood wide apart, and spotted the whole surface of the snow-clad sides of the hills towards the lake.

I got out of the *sani* several times, indeed, for the purpose of making more free observations, and confirming the reality of what we appeared to see. And were it not for the time we took in crossing, which was five hours, travelling at full speed, I could not have believed that there was any proportion between the calculation and the reality in respect to the distance. There was, indeed, but little difference in the appearance of the hills, and the vegetation which clothed them, whether they were seen from the distance of nearly sixty, or of half-a-dozen, versts from their base.

Whether this elongation of the view to such a wonderful degree beyond the ordinary powers of vision, proceeded from the rarefaction of the air by the cold, or from some magnifying power caused by any relation between the line of the visual ray and that of the smooth substance over which it passed, or were the result of both these causes, or of some other, it was to myself, though before familiar with ice and snow and sledge travelling in countries hardly inferior to this in the rarity of the air and the grandeur of their natural features, as new as it was unaccountable.

Nothing obstructed our smooth way during the whole passage of the lake. As we approached the shore, our attention was attracted, by the similitude we perceived

between the appearance of the visible objects on the coast, and those we see when we are approaching the land on ship-board. This was particularly remarkable as the buildings at the post station on shore rose gradually above the line of the horizon, from the time we perceived their roofs, until we reached the shore.

It will be remembered that the traveller has two stages of coasting to perform before reaching the Angara, by the entrance of which we come upon the road across the remaining country to Irkoutsk. We had of course breakfasted before we took the ice, and had, therefore, nothing to detain us longer at the station at which we landed, than was necessary to imbibe the proper quantity of heat for the next stage.

The weather had been perfectly calm during the first hours of our passage of the great lake. The wind, however, began to blow before we had made half our crossing; but as its course was directly that which we were pursuing, it caused us no inconvenience, save such as arose from the augmentation of cold.

When we came out of the perfect oven in which we had rejoiced for about an hour, we found little apparent change in the weather; and we descended to the ice, where we had left our *sani*, and the horses being already attached, we commenced our coasting journey without any further delay.

The shores of the lake are unequal, and so indented with bays, separated by promontories, that the traveller is sometimes six or seven versts from the shore during his journey. While we were in this position, we experienced one of those violent and short-enduring storms which have been mentioned among the phenomena which characterise this remarkable inland sea, and which often expose travellers, both in summer and winter, to imminent peril. As we were crossing one of the deep indents, with the wind directly at our backs,

we observed several loaded *sani*, that had been approaching us, and were at the distance of about two versts, suddenly turn and commence the trot which the smooth ice permitted before the gale, and, upon putting our heads beyond the hood that sheltered us, we discerned the cause. Within a verst or two in our rear, a perfect tempest appeared already raging. It seemed as if a volcano had suddenly burst the ice and divided the waters, and was throwing up its fire and smoke together into the air. Clouds of fine snow seemed whirling round a centre, or rushing against each other, like the vapours in the air during a rotatory storm; while the rays of the sun, by the inequality of the objects upon which they fell, produced all the appearance that the imagination may picture of the bursting out of a mighty volcano.

The enjoyment of the scene which was here presented to us, was not qualified by any such apprehension of danger as we might have experienced at a greater distance from the shore; and we now took the bearings by our compass of the promontory ahead, that we might know our course, after we should, as we could not fail to do in a few minutes, lose sight of the land. The snow at first drifted by us like dust over the surface of the ground, but soon reached us in a solid cloud, driven by the wind with such violence, that it was with difficulty we could keep our *sani* from swinging round, and perhaps throwing the horses. We contrived, however, to scud before the irresistible elements for about an hour, when we made with great nicety the promontory beyond which our next station lay; and now, better sheltered by the land as we proceeded, we soon got snugly housed for the remainder of the time that the bad weather might continue.

The storm was of about two hours' duration; so that the day was too far spent when it abated to admit of

our accomplishing our object if we continued our journey, of passing the entrance of the Angara by day; we therefore stretched ourselves upon the benches at this station, to rest quietly until the morning.

With the return of daylight, we again took our seats in the *sani*, the motion of which we had seemed rather to miss than otherwise during the night. The atmosphere had now resumed its perfect serenity; and by the time we attained the entrance of the Angara, the sun had again dressed the mighty lake and the high and rugged hills around, in all their native magnificence; and we could not avoid feeling regret that we were leaving the scenes that we now a second time contemplated with the gratification that ever attends the view of the ruder and grander features of nature, wherever we behold them.

It has been before said, that the Angara forms the sole outlet for the waters of all the rivers that fall into the Baikal around the coasts of the lake on all sides, and that this river alone conducts the cold waters of the remarkable inland sea to the great river of Siberia, the noble Yenessei, which falls into the Arctic Ocean. As to the sources of the Angara, although one of the lesser streams that flows into the lake near its north-eastern extremity, is called the upper Angara, its real sources consist of a thousand streams, of which none has a superior claim, except the Selenga, which is the largest of them all.

On either side the broad sluice, or rapid, with which the River Angara commences, mountainous and rugged steeps display their varied scenes of rocky prominences and patches of dusky vegetation. But the shores upon the opposite side the river to that by which our path lay, and the bases of the hills, were obscured from our view by a dense mist, which rose to 100 feet above the surface of the troubled waters. The breadth of

the river at this point is probably about two versts. The edge of the ice of the lake made a curved line, from one point to the other, of the two headlands which form the entrance of the river. From beneath this, the stream was issuing and rushing with impetuous force down the rapid, as far as our sight extended; and, as we heard, to the distance of fifteen versts, throughout the whole of which it is never frozen.

When we had advanced a verst or two from the commencement of the rapids, along the shores of the river, our *yemstchik* pointed out to us a rock which was at intervals partially visible through the sparkling vapours near the middle of the river; and, as we proceeded, he related to us a tale which, though not perfectly intelligible to my companion, and of course myself, enabled us to account for our former *yemstchik's* terrors at this point of our journey. Thus much, however, of his story was clear; that the evil spirit—for among what people do we not find the strange creation which men's imaginations have often endowed even with the attributes of the Deity?—has chosen this rock for his "local habitation," in this romantic land, and that he here sits at his ease amidst the frightful turmoil around, ready, whenever the opportunity occurs, of drawing all the adventurous navigators of the "holy sea" within the dangerous vortices which surround his cold throne. And when there were any wrecked here, the *yemstchik* assured us, and which it was easy to believe, no remains or vestige of the sufferers or their bark were ever found. It is precisely the same with those who perish with their barks in the rapids of the great Canadian river. Whatever is wrecked there is doubtlessly destroyed by the force of the waters rushing over the rough bed across which they flow. But whatever might remain entire here, would be carried far beyond the country inhabited by either civilised or semi-civilised man.

We arrived the same evening at Irkoutsk.

## CHAP. XII.

### IRKOUTSK.

Design of further Travels.—Difficulties.—Ignorance of the Inhabitants of the Capital of the Country beyond them.—Plan of Travels.—Unexpected Difficulties.—Strange Conduct of a Merchant of the inferior Grade.—The Guilds well named.—Particulars of the Merchant's Conduct.—The Traveller's Doubts of the Cause.—Merchant's Display of his Riches.—Generosity of a Merchant of the First Guild.—Generosity of an exiled Lady.—The Governor accidentally acquainted with the Transaction.—Governor's Interference.—Usury of the Merchant.—Possible palliating Circumstance.

I HAD for some time contemplated prosecuting my travels as far as the coasts of the Pacific Ocean, and, if it were possible, still further; and, upon my return from Kiachta, I commenced collecting the necessary information for carrying out this purpose. The difficulties of the journey were represented to me as insurmountable; but to reports of this kind I was accustomed, and I believed that I knew very well the degree of estimation to which they were entitled. What struck me as most remarkable during my inquiries was, the ignorance displayed by the inhabitants of the capital of Eastern Siberia concerning the whole of the country to the east and the north of them, notwithstanding the communication kept up by the government through its civil and military officers, and the well-known contrary state of things usually prevailing in scantily populated countries, and prevailing indeed in Irkoutsk as far as regarded the settlements that lay upon the side towards Russia. This, too, was at a time when there was a pope among

them, not long since arrived from the most eastern extremity of the empire in Asia.

The plan which the information that I obtained enabled me to form was, to descend the Léna, the most eastern of the three great rivers of Siberia, as far as the last district town of Yakoutsk, and to pass the country between the great river and Ochotsk, which lies upon the coasts of the sea of that name in the Pacific Ocean, and thence to proceed, if possible, to Kamtschakta. I found I might descend the river with some merchants who annually navigated it, and probably cross the desert country to the ocean in the same company; and, as a ship was sent every year by the government of Kamtschakta to Ochotsk, and returned, I trusted I might proceed with her to the great peninsula. But, beyond this, all was uncertain, save that whalers fishing in the sea in the vicinity of that country, frequently put into its ports or bays; and one of these, it was hoped, might appear after our arrival, and afford me the opportunity of proceeding to one of the groups of islands in the great eastern ocean, or of passing over to some part of the western coast of America.

After this plan of travels, however, had been determined upon, and when the arrangements for putting it into execution were nearly completed, and the time at which it was necessary to depart was at hand, a difficulty arose which I had not anticipated, proceeding from the strange conduct of a merchant of Irkoutsk, by which I was very nearly prevented from prosecuting my travels, at least in that direction, for an entire year; and, as the circumstances connected with this affair may illustrate or confirm some opinions expressed in the foregoing pages, concerning the character of a portion of one class of the Russians, I shall relate them.

What has been said of the relations of the merchants to the other grades which compose Russian society, and

of their division into three distinct classes, which are designated by the terms first, second, and third guild, will be remembered; and, certainly, as far as we have even yet seen, it will not be disputed, that the Russian government has acted in this case more wisely than the governments of those countries where the orders in society are less clearly defined. No two characters among men in society can be further removed towards the opposite extremes, than those possessed by the merchants of the first and of the third of the grades into which they are here divided. The three grades might be very appropriately called severally by the names of the metals in which all nations carry on their commercial transactions; for just in proportion as gold is above silver in value, and silver is above copper, is the degree of worth, and the quality of the virtue, of the men in these three well-distinguished grades.

We have seen among those that it may now perhaps be allowable to call the golden class of the Russian merchants, one virtue, among others, particularly prevail; and that, such as must exercise a beneficial influence upon the morals of society generally, and is alike honourable to the government which gave this turn to the wealth of the country, and to the parties that have thus employed their riches. It is not the integrity of the first class of merchants in their business transactions, nor their proverbial hospitality, which latter virtue is common to all the Russians, but the active solicitude which they display about the education of their children, and the youth in general of their country, to which we refer. Thus men now, who have had the benefit of education, constantly rise from the third grade of the commercial classes to the highest, and sometimes their sons to the rank, not the meanest, of nobility, and in the Czar's uniform gain those decorations which open the way to their admission to the highest offices of

trust that the state of society and the Russian system admit.

Among the second grade, or silver class of merchants, instances of the same solicitude for the advance of the younger branches of their families, are not rare. But among the third, or the copper class, we find every thing that contributes to establish the characters of men, in the opposite extreme. The lower classes of the *chinovnik* can alone be compared with them. Usury, intemperance, gaming, and roguery under many forms, are the characteristics by which they are chiefly distinguished. And only to name their numbers would be a sufficient argument against the success, at the present time at least, of any attempt to put society generally upon a different footing in Russia from that upon which it exists.

We may now return to the particular transaction which has led to these additional remarks upon the Russian trading classes.

I had, upon my arrival at Irkoutsk, waited on a resident merchant, to present a letter of credit for such money as I might require to prosecute any further travels that I might undertake, after a convenient sojourn at this place. On account of my deficiency in the language, I was accompanied by my fellow-traveller from Krasnoyarsk, who presented the letter, and through whom I was informed that the credit was accepted. The merchant added, however, that he had not the money at the moment in the house, if it were immediately wanted. But, upon his being told that I should not require it before the spring, and as it was now only mid-winter, no difficulty seemed to remain, and we took our leave.

After this I thought nothing more of the matter, until a few days before the epoch I had fixed upon for leaving Irkoutsk, when I called again upon the merchant,

accompanied by the same interpreter as before, for the purpose of receiving the money, of which I was now in want. We found the merchant seated in the small counting-room, at his desk, alone, beneath his own portrait. He received us as he had done before; and, as soon as we were seated, my fellow-traveller recalled to his memory our former visit, reminded him of his engagement, and informed him that, as I was now upon the point of quitting Irkoutsk, I had called to receive from him the amount of the letter of credit. Nothing, during the time that had elapsed since our first visit, had been further from my thoughts than the probability of any refusal, on any pretence, on the part of the merchant, to pay the money at the time that it would be required. It had appeared, indeed, rather strange, both to my former companion and myself, when we considered the matter, after we left him on the first occasion, that he should not have any money whatever, as we understood him to state, in hand. But, as I subsequently heard that it was not the custom of the Siberian merchants to keep money in their houses, I thought no more about it. Thus, I was never more astonished than at this moment, when I found him positively deny even his acceptance of the letter of credit, and add his request, that I would write to St. Petersburg for the money.

The cause of his denial of having accepted the letter, and his refusal to pay the money, were in reality a mystery to us. He contended, indeed, that the security was not sufficient; but which we could not believe to be his real reason, since one of the first merchants of St. Petersburg, and one of the richest owners of Siberian mines residing in the same capital, were his securities. The merchant who had acted as my banker at St. Petersburg, having no correspondent at Irkoutsk, had transferred the business to one of a company of proprie-

tors of mines, whose chief transactions were necessarily with this country, and he had sent me the letter of credit, which thus became a double security, independent of that which he had, from its being well known that I was not travelling without ample evidence of respectability. Thus I could not help doubting that the merchant of Irkoutsk had the money, or the credit to raise it. However, whether in terror of subjecting himself to suspicions very dangerous to the repose of a mercantile man, or from any other cause, he sent word to the gentleman who had acted as interpreter between us, to say that he wished very much that he would do him the favour to call upon him; and, upon my friend so doing, he showed him notes to a large amount, which only however made the mystery of his conduct so much the greater. In the mean time he continued to persist in his refusal to pay the money, and there seemed no means of convincing him, either of the absurdity or the wickedness of his conduct.

What to do I found it difficult to determine. I must now return to Europe, or remain a year at Irkoutsk, unless there were some means of obtaining immediate justice. But, while I was considering what steps I should take, my anxiety, at least as far as being prevented setting out on my journey, was relieved, provided I could make up my mind to become a borrower. The story concerning the conduct of the merchant, and my probable detention, was too rare a little piece of news to escape the report of the many-tongued rumour of the capital, and the effect it produced was an immediate flow of feeling, as honourable to the Siberian merchants of the first grade as the transaction was discreditable to those of the grade, whichever it might be of the other two, to which this man belonged. The merchant at whose house I have already reported having received the proofs of true

Russian hospitality, but whose name has escaped my memory, sent me word immediately the story was told to him, that it would afford him much pleasure to cash the letter of credit in question. And, besides this, a lady with whom I was well acquainted among those in voluntary exile with their husbands, and who had been allowed by the government to enjoy all or a part of her ancient patrimony, sent me word also, that, although she had no money, she would give her house as security to raise the sum required, rather than that I should be detained.

My embarrassment was now only whether I should take advantage of one of these offers, or whether I should pursue the unpleasant course of soliciting the governor-general's influence with the repudiating merchant, which I knew to be the only means of compelling justice. But I was most unwilling to appear before his excellency as a complainant of one of the burghers under his government, after all the politeness which had been so generally shown me. I was, however, accidentally relieved from this difficulty by the turn of the table-talk at the government-house a few evenings before that upon which, if at all, I must necessarily depart. The general happened to ask what day I had fixed upon to leave Irkoutsk; and, when I named the day, a gentleman present immediately contradicted me, by saying that I could not go, on account of there not being, as he expressed himself, money enough in the Siberian capital to furnish my wants. This remark of course led to an explanation, and afterwards to an offer from the governor, unsolicited, to send for the merchant to require his explanation. I could not of course refuse this obliging offer, though I begged that my explanation of the matter might not be considered as a formal complaint. The governor well

appreciated this feeling, and the mere table-talk on the subject for the present dropped.

The next morning the merchant was summoned to the palace; and the governor, finding, upon the man's own statement, that his act was disgraceful to the lowest trader of the town, informed him what course was honourable, and what was his duty to perform in this matter, which, it need scarcely be added, produced me the money the same day. I feel compelled to add, however, that the money was not paid without the exaction, which it was out of the question my disputing, after what had occurred, of twenty silver rubles for the advance of the money. But, as this account of the transaction is but the version of one of the parties concerned, I feel equally compelled to state, that several of our friends were of opinion that our interpreter had been mistaken in the first instance, and that the letter of credit was never accepted, which, were it so, would at least palliate the wickedness, though not the folly and incivility, of the transaction.

## CHAP. XIII.

### JOURNEY TO THE RIVER LÉNA. — COMMENCEMENT OF THE VOYAGE UPON THE LÉNA.

Departure from Irkoutsk.—Aspect of the Country.—Village of Kondine.—Former Residence of Exiles of Rank.—Improved Appearance of the Country.—Cultivation.—Highlands.—Bouriat Inhabitants.—Arrival at the Léna.—A River-port.—Commerce in the Country.—Village of Katschougskaia.—Distinct Races.—Description of the Craft of the Léna.—Navigators of the River.—Their Armaments.—Our Crew.—Our Cargo.—Manner of conducting the Boats.—Departure.—Prayers.—Villages of the Léna.—Improved Appearance of the Country.—Character of the Villages.—Forests.—The Cuckoo.—Aquatic Birds.—Driven on a Bank.—Hints to Navigators of great Rivers.—Ice on the Shores.—Fine Weather.—Hills and Forests.—Broad Reaches of the River.—Kirenskc.

At length, upon the morning of the 9th of May, the 21st of our time, after having the day before taken a last leave of all my good friends at Irkoutsk, I left the town, in company with a Siberian merchant, who was bound upon an enterprise as far as the port of Ochotsk, upon the eastern coast of Siberia. The merchant had already despatched his wares by several waggons of the country, to meet his vessels, which were lying at Katschougskaia upon the Léna, at the distance of 250 versts from Irkoutsk, and where it was our intention to embark upon the great river which we were to descend for near 3000 versts upon our direct way.

It had been my intention to keep possession of my Swiss servant and interpreter, whom I had retained since our return from Kiachta; but I was unable to deter-

mine upon so doing, on account of the uncertainty of the future, which rendered it doubtful whether I was sufficiently provided with funds for every eventuality, unless I should hear again from Russia before my departure. I had written to Europe for an additional supply, but the communication having been cut off for some time by the inundations, as we afterwards heard, of the Volga, which were greater than usual at this season, I received no reply; and I was obliged to depart with no more funds than I thought my own absolute necessities required, and therefore without either servant or interpreter.

The carriage in which we left Irkoutsk was a *tarantass*, precisely similar to that in which I had performed the long journey of the previous summer. We took two horses over the three by which this vehicle is usually drawn, in anticipation of finding the roads very wet and bad; but they were drier than we expected, though very rough and irregular, and we were able to travel at our wonted Russian speed.

The country presented here more variety in the natural vegetation, and more cultivated land, than that in the immediate vicinity of Irkoutsk, upon the opposite side of the town. Its inhabitants are partly Bouriats, and partly Russo-Siberians, the descendants of exiles. At ten o'clock we passed some hills, which are called the Kalacke Mountains, and at mid-day we arrived at the village of Kondineskaia, twenty-three versts from Irkoutsk.

The country around this village still presented the same superior air of improvement over that upon the south side of the capital. Several of the higher class political exiles had chosen this spot for their residence, during the period between the cessation of the chief restraints upon their actions, and that at which they were permitted to dwell in the towns. Our *yemstchik*

pointed out to us a house pleasantly situated upon the declivity of a hill, at a distance of half a verst from the village, which was for some years occupied by one of the higher in rank of this order of exiles, who is now residing at Irkoutsk.

The country after this during the day presented to us the same natural features, with intervals of arable land, which, as we perceived from the somewhat spare stubble of the preceding year, had borne crops of rye, barley, and oats.

Early on the day after that on which we commenced our journey, we arrived at a small village called Mansourskaia, where we breakfasted. After this, we found the country still improving in natural fertility and agreeable views. A long range of hills appeared on our left hand, at further and nearer distances, as we proceeded; and sometimes, upon our right, the river upon which we were to embark a little further from its source, was seen wending its course through a still more varied country than any I had seen any where on this side of the Ural Mountains; unless, indeed, the shores of the Selenga, which, at the season at which I visited them, exhibited every thing to great disadvantage, might be an exception.

We found the country now chiefly inhabited by the Bouriats; and the effects of their sobriety, generally, with its accustomed attendant, steady industry, were here, as on the opposite side of the Baikal, seen to great advantage, compared with the progress of the Russo-Siberians.

As the day advanced, we found the country flatter and the scenery tamer. Early in the afternoon, after crossing an alluvial plain, we arrived at the place of embarkation upon the great river we were to descend. Here we found a marshy point of land, forming the inner side of an elbow of the river. By the bank of

the stream stood a number of huts and temporary sheds; and on the river, moored to the shore, were lying ten or twelve roughly constructed flat-bottomed craft. This little settlement is called the port of Mansursk. Immediately opposite to it is the village of Katschougskaia, seated upon more elevated ground; though the side on which we arrived has been chosen as more convenient for loading the craft which are to descend the river, as all the cargoes they carry come direct from Irkoutsk. At this point of the Léna is embarked all the merchandise designed for exchanging for furs, which are procured from the various tribes of the native inhabitants throughout the entire north-eastern districts of Siberia.

This mighty river, even here, at the distance of more than 4000 versts from the Arctic Sea, into which its waters fall, is a deep and clear stream, of about the breadth of our Thames at London; and it is at this season, perhaps, more rapid than any part of any navigable river in the world, except some portions of the Saint Lawrence, properly called the Rapids. It presents, as well here as at many other points of its course, the same peculiarity which has been noticed as prevailing with other rivers both in Russia Proper and in Siberia, of high banks on the right hand along the course through which it flows, and more frequently low and marshy land, which is often subject to inundations, upon the opposite shores.

The village of Katschougskaia possesses a church, which is painted in gaudy yellow, and has some of the better sort of Siberian houses ranged along the high bank by the river, which, together, give to the place rather a gay and agreeable aspect.

I visited this village during the time we were detained here. It is inhabited by Russo-Siberians and Bouriats, the latter being the most numerous. Its

site has been well chosen; but it has nothing remarkable within it, and nothing differing from the ordinary Siberian villages inhabited by the same mixed races.

We found the craft by which we were to proceed, lying against the low banks of the river, in company with several others of the same description, all awaiting the arrival of their cargoes; and, as our merchandise had not yet reached the port, we had ample time to make all our necessary preparations for the river voyage, which we could not calculate upon accomplishing in much less than a month.

The boats, if boats they might be termed, were mere frail flat-bottomed craft, something resembling in form such of our river barges as are not rounded at the stem and stern. They are formed of stout planks, which are obtained from the forests that are found near the sources of the river, and are put together for the purpose of descending the rapid current, without being intended to return with the merchandise for which the cargoes that they carry are exchanged. They are nearly uniform in construction; and for the security of the merchandise which they carry, against rain, they have a covering of planks forming a roof similar to that of many houses, each plank being placed fore and aft, and lapping over that below it. On their arrival at their destination, they are broken up; and the merchandise taken in exchange for their cargoes, which consists chiefly of furs, is sometimes brought up the stream in smaller craft, which are impelled by both oar and sail, and sometimes in *sani* upon the ice in winter.

As no more merchandise arrived to-day than some few packages, which reached the port in the morning, the crews of the whole flat-bottomed fleet had the evening at their disposal; and, at the close of the day,

they fell to amusing themselves in the manner that agreed best with their habits and character.

During the first part of the evening, the scene was like that of a little *gostinnoi dvor*. Every one was busy, buying or selling among the stalls of the little temporary settlement, or eating or drinking. After this they seemed to pursue their several inclinations, well agreed, at least, in one of these, which was, in doing justice to the precious *vodka*. Those who belonged to the shore were chiefly Russo-Siberians and Bouriats, with a few Tatars; but among the crews of the vessels were mingled a fair proportion of Yakoutes, the proper inhabitants of the country that we were approaching. The Russo-Siberians sat chiefly drinking beneath the sheds, all telling stories at the same time, with nobody to listen to them; and of these there were some whose caftan and bonnet indicated that they had known better breeding. The Bouriats and the Yakoutes sat on the ground around their fires and cauldrons of *stchee*, until "in swinish sleep, their drenched natures lay" stretched out upon the wet surface of the ground.

That which to a stranger appeared the most remarkable in this scene, was the perfect harmony which prevailed among so many people of such different races. In an assemblage of between 100 and 200 boatmen, of three or more semi-barbarous tribes, when there was no longer a particle left among them of that attribute of humanity which chiefly distinguishes us from the beasts of the field, not a quarrel, not a dispute of any sort, arose. If we were to seek for the cause of this absence of the ordinary concomitant in most countries of drunken habits, we should perhaps find it arise from a certain habitual dread of disobedience to the law, which they know, as long as they have a grain of sense

left, they might, while disputing among one another, unconsciously commit.

There were also a number of women in the sheds during the day; but they, for the most part, retired at an early hour to their homes, upon the opposite side of the river.

After a walk among these scenes of intemperance, I retired on board our craft, and lay down upon some bales of merchandise, and slept out the rest of the night very comfortably.

Upon awaking the next morning, I found all hands actively engaged on board and on shore, in shipping and stowing the remainder of our cargo, which had arrived during the night; and not a man appeared to be a whit the less active, or exhibited any more signs of the debauch of the preceding evening, than if there had been nothing drunk that was stronger than *quass.*

Several of the boats were able to proceed on their voyage during this day: and upon the following, after passing a similar night to the last, we were ready at an early hour; and soon after sunrise, our men were mustered, and every thing made ready for our departure. Our crew consisted of three Russo-Siberians, two Tatars, and three Yakoutes, commanded by an old navigator of the river of the first-mentioned of these races; and there were, as passengers, the merchant, his chief man of business, two soldiers, and myself. Our cargo consisted of tea, Chinese sugar, hardware, silk stuffs, Chinese cotton, yarns, cloth, *vodka,* rye and wheaten flour, rope, and various minor articles of merchandise.

The weather was fine on the day we commenced our river voyage; and, although there was a great deal of ice still remaining upon the shores of the river, the main channel was clear, and we pushed out into the stream and committed ourselves to the guidance of the current, now running at the rate of seven versts an

hour. All, indeed, that it is possible for the crew of these craft to perform after the voyage is commenced, is to obtain a little influence over the direction of the drift by means of large oars. By these, the shapeless and frail vessel is made to avoid the shoals on which, without their aid, she would frequently ground

The position at which we had been moored was a little above the village; and as we now swept rapidly by its holy edifice, which formed a conspicuous object, all, save the Tatars, doffed their caps and fell upon their knees, and, with many crossings, offered up their petitions to the Virgin, to conduct us in safety to the end of our voyage.

As we lost sight of the village of Katschougskaia, we had steep hills on either side of our course, thinly covered with mixed woods, chiefly of the fir tribes; and there were here and there some small patches of cultivated land. During the second hour, we were driving through narrower passes of the river, between steep cliffs of red sandstone of considerable elevation. All that was here visible of the soil upon the banks of the river and upon the hills was of the same colour as the cliffs, and the woods were still of fir thinly sown.

Soon after we had swept through these narrow passages, we passed by the Russo-Siberian village of Korkinskaya, upon the right bank of the river. The position of this village seemed as isolated and desolate as could well be conceived.

Two hours after this, we passed the village of Ponomarefskaya upon the same side of the river. The country was now less hilly, and we observed a greater variety of vegetation in the natural forests; and there was also more cultivation to be seen at a distance from the banks of the river.

Before noon, we passed the village Yigolafskaya, upon our right hand; and three hours later, we brought up

at Oustilguinskaya, a considerable village, with two churches, one of which was in a state of decay, and the other not quite finished.

The last-mentioned of these villages, the captain of our boat informed us, contained an industrious population and a manufactory of stockings and nightcaps, both of which articles were produced entirely by the hand. We stopped here for a short time to endeavour to obtain some milk for our supper, in which we were successful.

At a distance of twenty versts further, we passed the small village of Bolofskaya. Here the colour of the soil along the inclined planes, more particularly upon the right bank of the river, indicated the existence of iron ore. During the afternoon we passed several of the smaller description of villages, and we found the country generally improving in aspect, with the firs in which it abounded of superior growth.

But it is necessary here to observe, that these villages, by which we were passing with such rapidity, as well as all that may not, as we proceed, be especially noticed, consist generally but of mere settlements of some half-dozen or dozen houses, and sometimes of not more than one or two, with small patches of cultivated land, but without any claim to be designated villages, save the names given them by the government on account of their being made stations for the winter posts.

The face of the country as we proceeded continued to improve in appearance by the increase in the variety of the vegetation with which the hills were decked. The silver birch was now abundant, and there were more pines of a larger growth than we had before seen, distributed among the lesser species of the fir tribes. Before sunset we observed the first signs of the close of the winter sleep of the vegetable world, in the green tinge among the birches, where they were more thickly

sown in the sheltered valleys. We had the cheering voice, too, of the cuckoo at intervals during the day. At night we brought up and moored against the banks of the river, at 170 versts from our place of embarkation, as it was not prudent to continue to drift during the hours of darkness, while we were at this part of the rapid river. Very little use may be made of the oars during the daylight in these craft upon the Léna, and none at all during the darkness: so that, by a freak of the current, the boats are sometimes carried into the midst of an inundated plain, and left without the possibility of recovering them. When this occurs, their cargoes are detained, until they can be transported upon the ice during the succeeding winter, or re-shipped on board new craft during the following summer.

We did not recommence our drift the next morning until an hour after sunrise. At nine o'clock we passed several houses with a small piece of cultivated land. The country on both sides of the river was here varied with hill and dale; and in many places, the vegetation, from the highest trees to the lowest, was of the "second growth." At distances apart, stood the tall trunks of pines, presenting the traces of the element that had consumed the original forest, and surrounded with birches and spruces, which were sown scantily upon the declivities of the hills, but in great abundance in the valleys.

We had to-day a strong northerly wind, which was directly against us, and we did not drift with the same rapidity, nor glide so gently down the stream, as on the previous day. The force of the wind, too, and the eddies and whirlpools, caused in part by the opposition of the wind in the open reaches, kept the crew actively occupied in directing the course of the drift during the whole of the day. During the afternoon, we passed by

the village of Omoloofskaya, which had both an old and a new church similar to those of Verkolinsk.

On the evening of this day, we had some difficulty in getting to moorings; but we finally placed ourselves beneath the banks of the river by the village of Ouste-Koutskaya, near the point at which the tributary river of that name falls into the Léna. There is here a distillery of *vodka;* and there is a church in the act of building, to replace one now in a state of decay.

On the following morning, we cast off from the river's bank at the break of day. The wind had now abated, and the weather was serene, with the sky clear; and the thermometer was standing at 11 degrees of heat. Early in the day we passed a village, which presented the same gloomy aspect as the majority of those we saw.

We had observed but few aquatic birds before to-day; but the ducks of several varieties in their kind were here seen sailing about upon the stream or upon the wing in large flocks. But they were wilder than might have been expected, where they must be so rarely disturbed. We put out a canoe, without succeeding in approaching within shot of any of them; and one only was killed by one of the men from the boat as we drifted.

In the middle of this day we brought up at the village of Kosarki, for the purpose of purchasing rope, of which there is here a little manufactory; but this did not detain us long.

The country, as we proceeded, continued to present the same aspect as that which we had hitherto usually seen since our embarkation. In the afternoon we met with a little accident, which, as it gave occasion for the display of the inventive genius of the Siberian boatmen, deserves particular notice.

While we were drifting at the usual rate, and the

hands were engaged in obtaining all the influence in their power over the vessel's course, we unavoidably fell upon a sand-bank, which formed part of a small island near the centre of the stream. From the position in which the vessel was thrown, arose our difficulty. As her bow struck the bank, and she received the force of the current, she swung round, and brought up with her stern fast aground. All the ordinary means were now resorted to to get her off. An anchor was taken out, and the crew worked hard at the oars; but all was in vain, until the following means were employed.

A long and broad plank was first laid flat on the water in a direction perpendicular to the side of the vessel, with one end fastened to her near the quarter, and the other attached to her stern by a stout rope. This rope, at the end which held the plank, was divided into two parts, each of which was fastened to one of the corners of the plank in a manner similar to that in which a line is attached to a log-ship, to measure the knots that a ship is running, or as ropes are attached to the slabs of a pair of scales. But, in order to keep the plank for the present flat upon the water, another rope that was sufficiently strong to resist the force of the current and retain the plank in its position, while the edge only was opposed to the stream, was attached singly to one of the corners, by which all was kept perfectly steady until the moment at which the force was required. At this moment, the shorter rope was slackened or let go, upon which the plank turned upon its edge, and in this position received the full force of the current, which, as it is evident from the relative position of the plank and the vessel, and the course of the stream, was not a dead pull, but rather that of a lever, not unlike such as is formed by the wheel of a water-mill.

The immediate effect of the turning of the plank was the swinging round of our vessel, till her side was

exposed to the current in its strength, upon which she floated directly into the channel of the river; and thus, after about two hours' delay, we were again gliding down the smooth and rapid stream.

The country through which we passed towards the evening of this day was thicker sown with firs than any we had before seen; and, in some places, the hills upon our left hand presented entire groves of red and white pine. We continued to drift this evening as long as it was possible, and at night, moored by the shore where there were no habitations.

Early the next morning we passed a village with a church. This day was showery, with a cold northerly wind; but nothing obstructed our way, or called for any exertion on the part of the crew: and we glided smoothly along between the hills, which were covered with still thicker groves of pine than we had any where before seen, and composed also of trees of a larger growth.

We had found the ice upon the shores as we proceeded every day in greater quantities. But it was lying in some of the coves, in fields undisturbed by the current that swept down the channel of the river; and in some places it was strewed in large masses upon the shores on both sides. From this, it seemed evident, that we were advancing more rapidly northwards than the genial summer heat. But if we were outstripping the effects of the sun in our progress, we had, however, the advantage of lengthening the day in a greater proportion, by the change of our latitude, than by the advance of the sun. It was now the 15th (our 27th) of May, and we were already north of the 55th degree, where the period that the sun at this season is below the horizon during the twenty-four hours little exceeds six hours; and, when the sky was clear, the night was

light enough to admit of our continuing our drift, without any necessity for mooring.

The next morning, we swept rapidly by the village of Urkutsk, upon the left bank of the river. Immediately after this, we passed the tributary river, Kuta, which here meets the parent stream. Salt, which is obtained from some low land near the sources of this river, is manufactured here, and sent through all the northern and eastern districts of Siberia.

The next day we had a return of the finest weather, with light and favourable winds. The thermometer at eight o'clock in the morning was at 11 degrees of heat, and at mid-day the rays of the sun were scorching, though we were still floating between banks of ice, or broken masses of the frozen element, which were lying along the shore upon either side. At twelve o'clock, we passed the village of Markofskaya, with a church.

Throughout the greater part of our drift during to-day, the serpentine course of the stream, with the character of the hills, gave more than usual variety to the scenery around, and to the river very often the appearance of a lake. The hills were here steeper and higher than those we had before past, and were covered with red pine forests, apparently of a "second growth;" but the woods were very open, and the trees were not large. Nevertheless, the canoes that were to be seen at the villages, were made of single trunks of trees, rudely hollowed out, and were of large dimensions; and, as this attested the existence of very fine pine groves at some part or other of the river, we were led to inquire of the peasants where these groves were: but all the information we received was, that they did not go far to find them.

In the evening it became calm, and the scenery was greatly changed. We seemed now, from the distance which we were able to see before us, as if we were

gliding into an open and champaign country; and the water was so still, that the hills, and the forests that clothed them, were reflected upon its surface on either side, almost as distinctly as from an artificial mirror. In the meantime, our course was so gentle, though so rapid, that we were only sensible of being in motion, by the perpetual variations of the landscape.

The next day we were drifting in broader reaches of the river, and there appeared to be some slight diminution in the strength of the current. But the scenery presented the same features as during the last two or three days.

In the afternoon of this day, the 18th of the month, we reached Kirensk.

## CHAP. XIV.

### VOYAGE DOWN THE LÉNA—*continued.*

Kirensk.—Incivility of the Officials.—Captain of our Boat ill.—Aspect of the Country bordering the River.—Driven by the Current into an inundated Forest.—Hints to Navigators of Rivers.—Elevated Country.—Rocky Hills.—Vintimskaya.—Drunken Magistrate.—Arrest of the Traveller.—Ill Treatment of a Soldier.—Seizure of our Papers.—Detention of the Vessel.—Proceed on our Voyage.—Advantage of Moderation in Anger.

KIRENSK is a small new town, with an old and a new church, and a chapel, and is honoured by the residence of a *gorodnichii* of police, and a *zasidytell*, or inferior magistrate, as before-mentioned, to an *ispravnik*.

As this was the first place which we came to upon the Léna that had begun to assume the dignity of a town, it was also the first at which we had any vexations and detention. The merchant had some goods to leave here, which subjected us to so many formalities, and gave the *chinovnik* of the place so good an occasion of practising their wilful annoyances, that they involved the loss of the whole of the afternoon of the day of our arrival, and the night that followed, and a part of the next day. Even the passports afforded the occasion to detain and give us trouble. Happily, however, in my own case, the letters from the governor-general with which I was provided, superseded the necessity of any such document. Indeed, it must be acknowledged that all the *chinovnik*, and all persons in authority every where, had but to be told of the existence of such letters to respect them.

The captain of our boat had, unfortunately, been taken ill upon our arrival here, and we were now threatened with the total loss of his services, for perhaps the greater part of the remainder of the voyage. He had been paddling with the rest in the water for two hours, upon the occasion of our being aground; and the hardy boatman of the Léna—for not even the stoutest of men is exempt from the effects of exposure—was now laid up with a cold, accompanied with some fever, and a swoln throat.

Immediately after passing Kirensk, we drifted by some remarkable granite rocks of a red colour, forming the left bank of the river, and apparently between 600 and 1000 feet in height. The appearance of these rocky steeps was the more singular, as the country upon the opposite side of the river was quite of a different character. Here the land was lower than usual, and covered with firs, more stunted generally than those we had lately seen. It formed the most remarkable exception that I had any where the opportunity of observing, in either Russia or Siberia, to the general prevalence of higher land upon the right than upon the left banks of the rivers. At sun-set we passed a village with a church.

The river continued to increase very gradually in breadth as we proceeded, and its volume of water, in the same proportion to augment by the tributaries that fell into its main stream; and there appeared to be no diminution in the force of the current.

The day after we quitted Kirensk, we were detained an entire day by an accident, which was attributed to the unavoidable absence of our chief pilot from his duties. This accident was of the same character as the last. But, instead of driving upon a sand bank, we became entangled amidst the spreading branches of the trees in the midst of a forest. We had at Kirensk,

for the first time, observed any considerable inundation; and we were there first warned, that we must now be more attentive than ever to our pilotage. Nevertheless, some mistake appeared to have been made, in directing the course of our ponderous and unwieldy craft, which was not discovered until it was too late. Thus we now drifted upon a large island, of which nothing appeared above the water save a portion of the birches that covered it. When we first perceived that we were approaching this apparently sunken isle, every effort was made to divert the course of the vessel. But all was in vain; and we drifted swiftly down a perfect avenue, formed of the tops of the slender birch trees. The scene was most novel to us, as we glided down the rural canal; but while we all stood helpless, and gazing at the forest, and trusting that we should pass safely over the isle, we suddenly came to an abrupt termination of the passage, forming a sort of *cul de sac*, where we were completely entangled in the branches of the birches, and our drift arrested, without a hope of regaining the main channel of the river by any other means than retracing our course for the whole of the distance we had passed through the forest. To do this was, however, no easy matter, owing to the force of the current against us.

We spent some time in this disagreeable position, quite undecided, while we still wanted our chief pilot, what steps to take, to enable us to regain the river. By some it was proposed to cut away the tops of the trees that lay in our path; but this was found impracticable; and by others to work the boat through portions of the forest that appeared more open than the rest; but this afforded no prospect of success, for we could not judge of our distance from the river in any direction, and a canoe put out to reconnoitre would certainly upset the very moment she left the main

channel. However, we finally sent out ropes by our canoe against the stream, to be fastened to the firmest trees that could be found, to endeavour to drag the boat directly up the passage down which we had drifted. But we spent the entire day, and completely exhausted the whole of our crew, before we recovered by this means a quarter of the distance, which was probably a verst, that we had drifted into the forest. During the night, however, our merchant, and a part of our crew, paddled up the channel in the canoe, and went in search of some settlement; but, finding no inhabitants within twenty versts of where we lay, they did not return until the following day. By the aid, however, of a strong party of peasants, which they now brought with them, we finally warped ourselves out of the labyrinth early upon the day after that on which we had drifted into it; and we were well satisfied when we found ourselves once more driving down the open stream.

How many oaths were made on this occasion, or how many saints rudely invoked, though there seemed to be many, I am not able to say; but certainly some amends were made for any moderate quantity when our troubles were over; for, as soon as we found ourselves again gliding freely down the mid-channel of the river, the whole crew threw down their oars and fell upon their knees, and returned thanks for our escape from the necessity with which we had been threatened, of having to abandon our vessel, which would have been shipwreck to the merchant, and have left myself to seek whatever means I might find to continue my descent of the great river.

I have travelled in company with men of a less energetic temperament, who, in our case, would first have exhausted all their prayers, and exerted themselves, if at all, after they had found their piety unavailing; but

certainly the practice of the boatmen of the Léna is better, "*aide toi, et le Ciel t'aidera.*"

During the greater part of this day, with the exception of the tops of the trees of several such seemingly sunken islands as that upon which we had grounded, we had the same scenery of hills and valleys generally scantily sown with the several varieties of fir of stunted growth, and occasional groves of pines, with here and there a few birches, along the high banks of the river, and in the valleys. Towards evening, granite rocks, of higher and lower elevations, appeared upon the land; and there was a greater abundance of ice to be seen on the shores, and of snow upon the hills.

The day after that on which we got clear of the sunken island, we observed granite rocks still prevailing upon both sides of the river; and the moving panorama around us presented several picturesque scenes. We observed, too, still more snow upon the sides of the hills, and greater quantities of ice on the shores, during the day's drift, than we had seen at any part of the river we had previously passed by.

At two hours after noon of this day, we passed a hill near the river, of greater altitude than any we had before observed; and, as it was reported, according to the information of our pilots, to have a sulphurous spring at its base, I took the canoe, and went on shore with one of the crew, as the weightier craft drifted, in order to obtain some of the water. But we were not able to discover the spring during the short time that we could conveniently remain.

Early during the same afternoon, we passed the village of Tschouiskaya; and, at the distance of twenty-one versts further, we moored at the village or very small town of Vitimskaya, where our merchant had some business to transact.

At this place occurred one of those little adventures

attended with inconveniences, to which a traveller must be occasionally exposed, but the circumstances of which, however unimportant in their result, the character of this narrative demands should be exactly related.

As soon as we were moored, the merchant and his man of business went on shore to transact their affairs; but I did not, upon this occasion, as had been my custom at other times, accompany them. Shortly, however, after they left the vessel, my attention was attracted by the firing of guns, which I thought it very likely was intended to welcome our arrival, as the first boat very possibly of the season; and my curiosity was at the same time attracted by the appearance of a wigwam in the midst of the wooden huts of the village, which I was told, upon inquiry, was one of the kind dwelt in by the Tungouse, already mentioned as one of the nomadic tribes of this part of Siberia. Influenced by my curiosity on both these accounts, I marched on shore quite alone, and first set off to inspect the Tungouse wigwam. This I found, however, empty; and I had only here the opportunity of observing that, both in materials and in construction, this wigwam precisely resembled those of the degraded tribe of Indians of North America, the Micmacs, who are found hardly in a state of society, in that portion of the British provinces which is the most settled by the European races.

From this I directed my steps towards the opposite end of the village, which appeared to be the quarter at which the firing was still heard. As I proceeded, I met two parties, each consisting of three or four persons of both sexes, some of whom were dressed in European costume, and some in the *schouba*. The women, however, who were without *schoubas*, were decked in such gaudy colours, that I was in doubt whether they wore fancy dresses for the occasion of some *fête*, or whether

they were attired in the height of the fashion of the ladies of the Léna. It did not occur to me to recognise the parties as I passed by them, which, though I saw no uniform civil or military among them, I should otherwise probably not have omitted. I had not, however, proceeded many paces, after passing them, before I was followed by one of the gentlemen of the second party, who called out something which I did not understand. Upon my stopping, however, he came up, and demanded, as far as I could understand him, my name and my business. But such was the rude manner of the man's addressing me, that I felt under no obligation to be very polite in return. Nevertheless, I told him my name, and then added, or endeavoured to do so—for I cannot undertake to say that I made myself understood—"As to my business, it is sufficient that I have a passport, which, when I know that you are authorised to demand it, you shall see." Upon this he appeared satisfied, and left me. But by the time that I had advanced thirty or forty paces further, he called again to me to stop; which summons, of course, I obeyed; and he now came up to the spot on which I stood, and, after placing himself directly in my path, put some question to me, in words, indeed, which I did not understand, but in such a manner that it required no skill in any particular idiom to comprehend enough of to deem them to be impertinent.

My answer to this unexpected incivility was now, of course, short. I said, indeed, merely, "*Nayrazoumaiou*" (I do not understand you). Upon this, the fellow launched into a strain of violent language, accompanied, as it appeared to me, from the manner in which he suited his actions to his words, with parallel threats. However, I repeated the words I had before used, with an accent intended to correspond to the style of the language addressed to me. Thus far, however, there

was nothing like violence offered. But, upon my now turning to walk on, the man threw himself directly in my way, and flourishing a stick over my head, threatened to use it, in a manner that it was impossible to misunderstand, in case I should attempt to proceed further in the direction I was going. Upon this, I seized the stick, wrested it from his hands, and threatened him precisely in the same manner that I had been threatened myself, and, as it is proper to confess, not without using words, which, in their turn, could not be taken for syllables of peace, but which, to those who affect not great refinement, certainly afford some relief to anger, even in cases when we know their meaning is not so much as guessed by those to whom they are addressed.

On my thus returning the compliment of threats for which the man had made me his debtor, he drew back, wonderfully astonished, and called out to several peasants that had been following his party, and were now at hand, commanding them, in words that were equivalent, as they were afterwards repeated to me, to "arrest the spy."

I was now instantly seized by three or four stout fellows, who quickly tore my *schouba* from my back, and tied my arms behind with my own scarf. And in this condition I was marched off towards, as I supposed, some village prison. It happened, however, that one of the soldiers, who was passenger with us, passed by at this moment; and, as soon as he perceived the outrage that had been committed, though he did not utter a word, or seem to trouble himself about the matter, he turned back from the way he was going, and set off to convey information to the merchant and his man of business of the disagreeable position of their fellow-passenger. In the meantime, before any one arrived, through whom an explanation could take place, the news of the arrest

had found its way to the vessel; and our other soldier on board, who was a corporal and a very sensible fellow, shocked at the intelligence, had set off immediately for the scene of the outrage. This soldier met us on our way towards some village prison, and began at once to expostulate with the violent man, who, it appeared, was a *zasidytell* or officer, who acts as the chief magistrate of a district, where there has been no *ispravnik*, or higher officer appointed, and which, indeed, I had already discovered from the conversation and actions of the peasants, by whom he had been so promptly obeyed. This, however, became the signal for something more than threats towards the charitable soldier; for the brave magistrate now seized the good man's hat, which had not been doffed, and proceeded to thrash the poor fellow most unmercifully with his stick. The soldier, however, bore this with excellent command of temper, and the most exemplary respect for the office of his persecutor, by whom authority was so monstrously abused. But as soon as he was able, he turned and walked off; and I observed him afterwards, as we proceeded more slowly, making all possible haste, in search, as there could be no doubt, of the merchant and his man of business. He soon met my two fellow-passengers, who, having heard of the arrest from the other soldier, were already in search of me; the parties encountered, while I was still in charge of the two peasants, but without the magistrate, who was following very leisurely at some distance.

The merchant, by asking some questions of the peasants, contrived, without attempting to stop them in the execution of the *zasidytell's* orders, to detain us until the arrival of the magistrate, who, when he came up, without putting any questions, threatened to treat them as he had done the soldier. My friends immediately perceived that the man was inebriated.

They knew, however, that it was not easy for any one to be in such a condition as not to remember the purport of such words as indicated the consequences of ill-treating a foreigner, and more particularly one travelling under the especial protection of the governor-in-chief of the country; and these were no sooner uttered than I was released.

But there was yet another act in the farce. The drunken magistrate now demanded to be conducted on board our vessel, where he seemed to think he should have a safer stage to play his part upon. And as there was nothing to be said in opposition to this, the merchant led the way, and the brave *chinovnik* followed, accompanied by his troop of peasants.

As soon as we were all on board the vessel, the fellow peremptorily demanded the passports, and the papers descriptive of our cargo; and upon seeing these he pretended that he found every thing irregular with respect to the cargo; and he now caused the peasants to derange all our well-packed goods, pocketed the papers, and stopped the vessel yet more effectually, by ordering some among his train of attendants to carry the oars on shore, besides sending to prison one of the crew who had ventured to make some observations concerning the proceedings that were going on.

By this treatment, we were detained until ten o'clock the next morning, when we were released by this precious magistrate, who was now sufficiently master of himself to regain his respect for the laws, which he had so wantonly outraged.

I must further add, that every one to whom the account of this affair was related thought it the luckiest thing in the world that I did not strike the magistrate; for, in case the fellow had uttered any thing that might have seemed a definite command to take prompt vengeance, which it was believed he was very likely

in that case to have done, the Yakoute peasants th surrounded him would not have hesitated a mom to knock out my brains. Future travellers in Siber therefore, ought to beware of an encounter with a *zasidytell* that they may chance to find upon th banks of the Léna.

## CHAP. XV.

### VOYAGE DOWN THE LÉNA—*continued.*

Pass the Entrance of the River Vintim.—First southerly Wind.—Chamarinskaya.—Cross the Line of Sixtieth Degree of Latitude.—Villages.—Remarkable Contrivance to counteract the Effect of a Head Wind.—Mountainous Country.—Tchookhea (the magnificent).—Grandeur of the Scenery.—Varied natural Objects of Grandeur.—A very rare Novelty in natural Scenery.—The River Ora.—Superstitions connected with this Part of the River.—Picturesque Reaches.—Recross the Line of the Sixtieth Degree of Latitude.—Change in the Aspect of the Country.—Yakoute Settlements.—Canoes of the Natives.—Visit to Yakoute Huts.—Painful Condition between that of the Wild and that of the Civilised Man.—Some Tungouse Natives.—Russian Mode of civilising the Natives.—Semi-savages at Olekininsk.—Beggars.—Meeting with Lieut. Rosinburg.—His Opinions of the Adventure at Vintimskaia.—Mammoth's Teeth.—Sterlet.—Change in the Face of the Country.—A Tempest.—Effects on the Crew.—Great Change in the Temperature of the Air.—Character of the Climate.—Granite Rocks.—Change in the Character of the River.—Brilliant Appearance of the Heavens at Sunset.—View of Yakoutsk.—Arrival.

IMMEDIATELY opposite to Vintimskaia the River Vintim falls in a fine bold stream into the Léna; and as the great river does not here become broader, the force of the current is considerably augmented.

We had on this day the first southerly wind that favoured us during our voyage, accompanied with rain. The land on either side of the river was here lower than any we had seen for some days, and a greater quantity of snow appeared upon the country, especially on our right hand; and there was but little diminution

of the cold. During the night we passed the village of Chamarinskaia.

The next day we crossed the line of the 60th degree of latitude; and although the sun at this season in this parallel is still near six hours below the horizon, it was hardly dusk at midnight. Our course was here easterly; and the wind, which had changed to that direction, was now colder than we had before felt it at any time since we embarked. The face of the country was here similar to that through which we had passed upon the preceding day, shaded with the deeper green foliage of the several varieties of the firs of more stunted growth; and the snow and ice were in the usual quantities.

In the middle of the day, we passed by the village of Bagajarinskaia. In the afternoon, the wind was sufficiently strong to impede our progress considerably, until a contrivance of the mother of invention to counteract its effects was thus constructed and employed. The boatmen rigged a large square frame, composed of poles of about ten feet in length, by which was held extended a closely wrought net. At two of the corners of this were tied large stones, and at all the corners were attached the ends of ropes, which led to a larger rope at about twenty feet from the frame, precisely after the manner of the logship and line. This frame was now thrown into the stream, and one side of it sinking by the weight of the stones at two of the corners, placed it exactly in the position of the logship when overboard, with its upper edge even with the surface of the water. And now, while this drifted with the current, wholly unaffected by the wind, as the line was paid out, it discovered to us that we were losing, by the counteraction of the wind, about a verst and a half an hour, or, in other words, stemming the stream through this opposition of the elements, and drifting that distance

ss by the land during the hour than the current was ınning. But, upon making the rope fast, the frame ıstantly acted like a propelling force against the wind, nd appeared nearly to negative its effects. A sail, or few yards of canvass would doubtless have obtained, or us all the advantage we received from the invention, ven better than our net.

Towards evening we approached a more mountainous ountry; and during the period of the dim light, in the ıhort absence of the sun, we passed through a strait, which the navigators of the Léna have rightly named *Tchookhea*—the Magnificent. The natural objects here present the most striking of all the scenes which this mighty river exhibits. I saw them, unfortunately, but imperfectly; for I was not previously informed of our approach towards any thing remarkable, and I was sound asleep when we passed through the grandest portion of the strait. Happily, however, I rose by accident, while we had yet a distant view of the remarkable objects by which it is formed. At the distance of ten or fifteen versts, by full daylight, it appeared like a vast rent in the range of mountains, which are here composed of granite rock. But this distance was too great to observe it from, to admit of the spectator speaking confidently of the breadth of the passage, or of any thing further concerning it.

The whole country, indeed, at this part of the Léna is magnificent in the extreme. It resembles some of the grander passes of the Rhine, near the sources of that river, with the advantage to the spectator, who may be navigating the Léna, of floating upon a far mightier stream. In some places, indeed, appear the boldest and most picturesque scenery that may, perhaps, be any where beheld, bordering any river in any land. The most striking that I saw to advantage was at the mouth of the River Ora, which falls by a

narrow channel, between high and precipitous rocks upon the left bank, into the parent stream. It was such as we think we could gaze upon for ever. But there was a novelty which formed a portion of it, of a very rare kind among the natural objects that mountain lands exhibit. The mother of the arts was here seen rather as a copyist of the works of men's hands than as the model to guide them. Perhaps Nature has no where produced any thing more nearly resembling the works, of men than the prodigious rocks with which she has here bordered and overhung this great river. I was for a minute or two deceived, and believed we were looking upon the remains of the architectural works of some race of our species that might have inhabited the land, when the great mammoth trod the firm earth of the country, at this time watered by the mighty Léna. The appearance, indeed, which is here presented of architectural ruins has so near a resemblance to many remains of the productions of the earlier ages of European history, that they will excite the wonder and interest of every traveller who beholds them. We seemed to look upon a vast fortress with several towers, one of which appeared even circular. The proper walls of the place, overhanging the water of the narrower stream, seemed to be supported by artificial stone work, resting upon jets or steps of the rock; and upon the side of the land, as far as the seeming walls were not hid from the view, was seen even the appearance of a lofty gate. Nay, even loop-holes appeared to be pierced in several parts of the walls. If a race of genii were dwelling up this romantic river, and had been occupying themselves in constructing works in imitation of our ancient fortresses, they could not be said to have been unsuccessful. There is, indeed, a traditionary legend among all the native races in this part of Siberia, con-

erning this particular spot of the Léna, which relates hat the banks of the Ora are inhabited by certain piritual beings, whose will has great influence upon he destinies of men. Thus, all the navigators of the reat river, who thread this pass when the season will permit, stay and bathe in the Ora, or at its mouth, which is thought to be complimentary and highly pleasing to the spiritual inhabitants of the vicinity.

I cannot help here confessing a weakness, that possessed me at this particular epoch of our voyage. This was a strong inclination to contemplate, and dwell on the thought, of some day returning to make a home of some ravine among these rocks, here to dwell and pass the remainder of life alone, or with the Tungouse tribe of natives, far from all the ills that we know man, in civilised life at least, is heir to. And although this might be to fly to others we know not of, that may be greater, I am able to say that I have seen much of the way of life of the Indian, and I believe his condition, generally, to be less subject to the severer ills than that of the greater portion of civilised men.

The views every where, near these grander passes of the Léna, were on all sides most magnificent. Rocks of all forms composed the summits of the mountains: deep green verdure covered their less elevated steps, and filled the valleys, which opened and closed to our sight as we swept rapidly down the current; and a line of sparkling ice bordered each shore, only broken at intervals by the passage of the waters of some tributary river into the parent stream.

After passing through the reaches which presented the boldest and most picturesque scenery, we observed less snow upon the hills, and none upon the lower lands; and there was less ice in the river. There was

also now some diminution in the force of the current by the increase of the breadth of the stream.

We had during this day been making a south-east course, until, after re-crossing the line of the 60th degree of latitude, towards evening, we attained a great elbow in the river at which the stream again turns to the north-east, to pursue its proper course towards the Arctic Ocean.

This point, at which the river turns, exhibited the most agreeable views, among those of tamer interest of any we saw upon the Léna. The right bank, which is, as usual, the highest, is here formed by a very gradually rising piece of ground, which was cleared of all trees or shrubs, and seemed laid out in pasture. Two houses were to be seen, each of which appeared to be occupied by the possessors of one half of this portion of reclaimed land amid the wastes which the shores of the river generally present.

The next day we entered the proper territory of the Yakoutes. The Yakoutes are the people the most remote from the seats of civilisation of all the semi-barbarous settled tribes, that have been in reality subjected to Russian dependence and received any of the benefits of regular government.

About mid-day, we were passing a lower country than usual, where there was less snow to be seen upon the hills than we had hitherto observed, and less ice on the shores of the river. Soon after this hour, we passed a scattered settlement of Yakoutes upon a tract of low pasture ground.

The first of the Yakoute race that we saw in their proper country were a few fishermen, who came alongside to offer us some sterlet. The men appeared to resemble the Bouriats in feature, and they are doubtless of Mongul origin. They have very little beard. But it was particularly remarkable, that all those we

saw on this occasion, though I did not afterwards observe the same thing general among the tribe, had elongated and pointed chins. As to clothes, though it was cold, they had no more than some strips of hides partially covering their bodies. Their canoes afforded myself, at least, much interest, from their resemblance to those of the American Indians. They were formed of birch bark, and, save a little variation at the extremities, were precisely similar to those of the Mohawks. They were the smallest, however, that I ever saw, and they carried each but one man, who managed them with a kind of double paddle. When he impelled his frail bark, he held this in the middle, and dipped the two ends, which were formed alike, alternately in the water. We saw afterwards, however, some canoes belonging to these people, which were formed of single logs, like those nearer the sources of the river.

Late in the day, we encountered so strong a wind, that, although it blew across the river, deprived us of all the power we were accustomed to obtain by the oars over the boat's drift. We now resorted to our frame and net above described, by the aid of which we passed safely through several reaches. At length, however, the violence of the gale overcame all our efforts, and we were driven on shore for the first time by the wind, since we embarked, upon a low bank, which bordered a swampy tract of country, over which were scattered a number of the log huts of the Yakoutes.

None of the huts that formed this Yakoute settlement were near the shore, nor were any of them easy to approach. The whole tract of land upon which they stood had been lately inundated, and was still wet and soggy; but, as I was anxious to see some of the dwellings of these people, I set off, accompanied by one of our crew, who was a Yakoute, and who loaded himself with empty bottles, which he hoped to bring back

filled with milk. After passing over half a verst of wet ground, covered with the decayed grass of the last year, we came to the nearest of the houses, where we found a family, consisting of an aged couple, some young women and girls and boys. They were a very little better dressed than the fishermen we had seen, and in the same material, and were all seated upon the ground round a small fire in the centre of the hut. The old man, as we entered, saluted us, and appeared pleased at our appearance, and requested, by signs and speech, that we would seat ourselves upon a mud bench that was by the wall on one side of the hut. This we declined doing, however, as we did not know how soon the boat might be able to proceed; and my Yakoute companion informed him, that we were only come to purchase some milk, if it was to be procured, and to pay for which we had brought with us some tobacco.

He told us, however, that his cattle were all astray in search of the young grass that was already springing upon the drier lands in the rear of the settlement. And all he had to sell us was some sterlet, which had been caught the day before, and which, as we had plenty of the same fish on board, we did not purchase.

Nothing could be more wretched than this Yakoute dwelling. It was a mere log hut, with a few poles laid across, over which sheets of birch bark were spread, forming a flat roof, in which an opening was left in the middle for the smoke of the fire to escape. Many of the houses of this people are of mud, and some have picket walls, bedaubed with mud, and banked up outside to four or five feet high with the same material.

There could hardly be a better illustration than this hut and its occupants afforded, of the painful character of the earlier stages which usually conduct men from a state of absolute barbarism to the con-

lition we call civilisation. The life of the wild man may be regarded as a dream, and the earliest stage of his social existence may be compared to the first moments of consciousness, when we awake from sound slumber and when the realities of life have not yet blotted out of the memory the impressions engendered in sleep. His visions of free thought and independent action have passed away, and his understanding is confounded by his imperfect conception of every thing around him, and his spirits are depressed by comparing his condition with that of men with whom he is associated, but with whom he has little or no sympathy. Moreover, his arm has lost its power to provide for his subsistence, through his ignorance of the arts with which his new mode of existence renders it necessary he should be acquainted. Nor would a similar comparison be wholly inapplicable to the condition of the mass of the peasant class of the Russo-Siberian people. The condition of the simple peasant, whose repose has not yet been disturbed by the first stages of education, or by contact with the inhabitants of the towns, is abundantly tranquil; but no sooner is this broken by commerce of any kind with the other classes of the people, than he is found shorn of all his original virtue, without having acquired any just impressions of the obligations which men owe to one another in society.

There was nothing of sufficient interest to keep us ten minutes in this Yakoute hut; and we did not visit a second. The distances between the dwellings were great, and the passage from one to the other was rather too much to undergo for the possible purchase only of a mere luxury such as that of which we were in search. We saw several cattle, however, grazing at a distance, among which were probably the old man's cows. There were also several horses, that appeared to be searching for the young grass beneath the decayed remains of the

last year's growth. And all of these were perfectly white, which, indeed, is the universal colour of the horse in the Yakoute country.

It was near midnight when the wind sufficiently abated to admit of our proceeding on our voyage. But it was perfect daylight as we launched again into the stream at this hour. Not a star was visible; but the sky, from the very ridges of the dark hills in the north-west, up to the zenith, was beautifully tinged with purple and red. And, as it now fell calm, we again rapidly advanced; and before eight o'clock in the morning, we had once more passed beyond the latitudinal line of the 60th degree.

The next morning several canoes came alongside with some fishermen of the native tribe of the Tungouse, none of whom we had before seen. But, as a better opportunity will occur to speak of this tribe, it will be sufficient here to observe, that whatever may be their origin, the most remarkable circumstances connected with their mode of life and condition, are the vast extent of country through which they wander, or in which they sojourn at different seasons of the year, and their docile character, which enables them to dwell where they will, unmolested by the Russians, or by the Yakoutes, or Bouriats, or any other tribes of more settled habits than themselves. They may be said to have not yet awakened, from the wild man's healthful slumber, to the painful experience of the degradation incident to the first stages of society. Happy, however, is it for their future prospects, that the terms of the Russian contact with the wild man are free from the ferocity of that of the Spaniards, and from the uncompromising character of that of the English, both of which, by different means, have led to the extinction of whole nations, even in some instances so completely as to have established very

generally, though, let us hope, very falsely, an impression, that every nation must perish, when brought into contact with another in advance of it in its social institutions.

The canoes of these Tungouse were like those of the Yakoutes. The men we now saw were slighter made than the Yakoutes, and bore a far greater resemblance to the Indians of North America than to the Tatar races of men. Yet it is remarkable that they resemble more the Indians of the eastern coast of America than those of the western coast, as far, at least, as my observation in that hemisphere has extended, which, indeed, has been chiefly among those of the eastern coast. Those we now saw wore deer skins, and were much better dressed than any of the Yakoutes we had hitherto seen.

The next morning we reached a considerable village called Olekininsk. We had a few goods to deliver here; and as it happened to be the residence of a *zasidytell* and a *gorodnichii*, it was of sufficient dignity to oblige us to perform ceremonies enough to cause us two hours' delay.

During our detention here, I took a walk through the place, tolerably secure, that there could not be another *zasidytell* like the one of Vintimskaia upon the banks of the same river. The inhabitants of this village are composed, about equally, of Russo-Siberians and Yakoutes; and they appeared to be the most ruffianly set of fellows that we had yet met with. A party of half-naked men were in one place quarrelling over the carcase of a cow they were cutting up, and others were lounging about in groups, as if they had no proper occupation. But the sight the most novel was that of four or five beggars, who were the first that might be properly so called, and the last that I saw in Siberia. They were petitioning the parties

that were quarrelling for some of those parts of the carcase that we are wont to throw to the dogs. Certainly, however, the condition of the pope of the place, whom we happened also to see, and who was the fattest of all the holy men I remember having seen in Siberia, the good *Khomba Lama* excepted, did not indicate this poverty to be universal. Among the women that appeared, and which may be mentioned as a novelty, there was one of considerable beauty.

Shortly before we left this place, Lieutenant Rosinburg, of the Imperial navy, arrived in a similar vessel to that by which we were descending the river. I have not before mentioned that I had the pleasure of making this gentleman's acquaintance at Irkoutsk. He was now proceeding with his wife to Ayan, a port upon the coast of the Ochotsk Sea, in which the Russo-American company have lately founded an establishment, in order to join a ship to arrive from Sitka, the seat of government of the Russians in their American possessions. He had heard in his passage down the river of the conduct of the *zasidytell* of Vintimskaia, and had been so annoyed by the circumstance, as to write immediately an account of it to the governor-general at Irkoutsk. "It was the luckiest thing possible," said the gallant sailor, "that I did not happen to arrive at the time of the occurrence; for, had I been there, I should have forgotten the respect due to office, and have thrashed the fellow into a stock-fish."

I could not help agreeing with the lieutenant, that it was certainly very fortunate that he did not arrive in time to make such a terrible example of the unfortunate man. But I will take this opportunity to remark that, wherever I afterwards went, I found the same feeling prevail, and the same disgust expressed, at the conduct of the drunken magistrate. In general, however, it was thought that it was better that the affair had closed

as it did, than that the man should have been so severely thrashed.

Early the next morning we passed Marchinskaya. Several of the people of this village came off in canoes, to offer for sale some huge teeth of the mammoth, which were the first remains we met with of that mighty habitant of the ancient world — of the animal that, should the skeleton at St. Petersburg perish, and all the ivory remains of his species be one day worked into ladies' trinkets, will no doubt pass for a fabulous creation of men's imagination before the dawn of natural science, and the date of the first records of proper natural history.

I must mention that we heard here, though the circumstance may perhaps be known to the naturalists of Europe, that all the ivory teeth or tusks that are discovered, at least at this part of Siberia, are found standing directly upright in the ground. Whatever speculation this circumstance is calculated to suggest, it seems at least to indicate that the animals perished by some sudden change in the condition of the material substances amidst which their remains are found. Some of the natives informed us, that the imperishable portions of the remains of these animals exist in such abundance in the islands of the Arctic Sea, off the coast of Siberia, that the very land seemed as if they were composed of them.

Soon after passing this village, we met some more Yakoutes in their canoes, fishing. The sterlets were here so plentiful, that we bought of one party, thirty of them of the size of small cod-fish, for about a pound of tobacco, and again, five more as large as moderate-sized cod, for six or seven pounds of rye flour.

The snow and ice had gradually diminished since we passed by the higher lands, and we now observed very little of either. The river and the face of the country

had also much changed. The river had become broader and less rapid, and the hills were lower, and the valleys of greater extent. In several places promontories of picturesque form, and partially covered with stunted firs, jutted out beyond the ordinary line of the shore; and by the winding of the stream, these appeared gradually to close and open, which sometimes gave to the scene the appearance of a lake, and at other times presented a perspective, resembling that which the succession of reflections from mirrors placed opposite to each other, presents to the eye in a large apartment.

It was calm during this day, and we had the same scenery until the evening, when the weather, which had been, with the exception of a few short periods of strong winds, remarkably serene since we embarked, changed over our heads to a tempest, but without causing any agitation of the air beneath. Dark clouds now seemed to roll against one another by the force of the opposed currents of air, and forked lightning flew across the sky at an elevation that seemed scarcely higher than the hills, and loud peals of thunder burst over our heads, and resounded from hill to hill through the still air, with terrible evidence of the mighty power possessed by the material elements of our planet, which seem at such a moment as if they had broken loose from the restraint imposed upon matter by established laws, and were about to reduce the beautiful order of nature to original chaos.

While this frightful state of the elements continued above our heads, not a drop of rain fell, and none of our men put themselves under shelter. Thus an opportunity was afforded to mark the effects of the storm upon the men of the several races, of which our crew were composed. The Russo-Siberians were seized with religious awe; and they fell upon their knees and remained

erfectly still, and said their prayers inaudibly, and coninually crossed themselves. The Tatars seemed but ittle affected. The Yakoutes fell upon their knees n the same manner as the Russians; but instead of naking the sign of the cross, they covered their faces with their hands and bent their heads upon some packages by which they knelt. And this little difference in the effect of the storm upon the Russians and the Yakoutes I was the more particular in remarking, because, as the latter crossed themselves after the manner of the Russians before every church as we passed by it, I did not suppose that any difference in their manner of expressing their feelings would upon this occasion have been observed. This, however, was not the sole evidence that fell under my observation, as will hereafter be seen, that although they may be very loyal subjects, and very obedient to the laws, they are not yet thoroughly subjected to the spiritual influence of the religion they outwardly profess.

At length the rain came down in torrents, and the storm, without a breath of air having been perceived upon the water, now passed away, leaving a degree of warmth in the atmosphere such as we had not felt until now.

The day after this, we had the same scenery as upon the two preceding days; and the weather was so fine, and the temperature so much changed, that it seemed as if nothing were now wanting, but the full-blown leaves of the birch groves, to establish the summer.

This change in the weather so truly characteristic of the climate, recalls to the memory the seasons that have passed since the commencement of these travels in Siberia, and upon which a few remarks may be now made with more confidence than they might have been offered upon any previous occasion.

It is commonly said of those countries which are

situated in high latitudes, that they have but two seasons. If we there estimate the four periods into which we divide the year by their several lengths, in proportion to the duration of the same season in the more temperate climates, it would scarcely be less erroneous to say, that the Siberians know but one season, than that they enjoy less than four. The four seasons, in fact, in all the inhabited portions of this country, are as distinct as those of any other country within the same zone. If, however, we compare them with those we experience in this country for instance, we may say that the winter there embraces nine months out of the twelve, and that two months only may be called summer, and we shall thus leave but one month for the seasons of spring and autumn. But if we consider the spring to commence with the first signs of reanimation in the vegetable world, and autumn to end with the fall of the last perennial green leaf, then we must deduct a month from the long winter, which we ought, however, to add to the summer, without giving a day more to the seasons of autumn and spring.

It was some time previous to this, as has been mentioned, that the first indications of the spring were to be seen among the groves of birch trees in the sheltered valleys by which we were drifting. Nevertheless, the heat until this time had not exceeded 8 or 9 degrees. But the change in the temperature was now so great, that the thermometer stood at 14 or 15 degrees, and the rays of the sun at mid-day were absolutely hot. We had embarked with the very first breaking up of the ice, upon the ninth of this month; and had indeed but a few days afterwards observed the first appearance of the green leaves, and upon this the 28th day of May of the time we are keeping, and the 9th of June of our time, we experienced the first day of summer thus characteristically established. Yet some snow was

still to be seen on the declivities of every hill, and some ice along the shores of the river, though it was hourly diminishing in quantity.

Another characteristic of the climate of Siberia generally, is the prevalence of a serene state of the atmosphere. Three especial exceptions only to this apparently general law have been mentioned up to this time during these travels, and two of these occurred where the places themselves are exceptions to the general character of the country. During almost the whole of the rest of my sojourn and travels in this land, whatever was the temperature of the air, or even the appearance of the sky, still the calm state of the atmosphere commonly prevailed; and this often during some of the heaviest falls of snow.

About mid-day we passed the village of Oimouranskaya, and in the evening that of Sineskaya. Here the river became between six and seven versts in width, and was full of low islands covered with small birch trees, while the shores were rocky and precipitous.

After this we floated between rugged hills, where needle-formed peaks of granite rock were observed shooting up between the dark firs, and presenting a most novel and picturesque scene. Early the next day we passed the village Arinskaya. We observed more ice in the river here than we had seen for several preceding days; and we had a chilly wind until the afternoon, when, as the sun declined, the wind fell, and the atmosphere resumed its wonted serenity and warmth.

At eight in the evening, we passed the government post of Bestiatskaya, at the distance of just eighty-four versts from the place of our destination. The river had here still increased in breadth, and there were many low marshy islands at intervals, covered with the remains of the grass and reeds of the last summer.

On either side, the land close to the river was now lower than usual; but we observed a mountainous country at some distance upon the left hand, and a few hills at a greater distance upon the right.

Our rate of drift was now slower than at any time during the voyage, and did not probably exceed five versts an hour. During the early part of the night we passed some cliffs of sandstone, upon which were gathered myriads of swallows, that were the first of the birds of summer we saw during our voyage. But notwithstanding this tolerable assurance, that the change we experienced in the weather was not merely temporary, our advance towards the northern regions did not seem to be more rapid than that of the season, in respect to the effects of the temperature upon the vegetable world; for the green leaves of the smaller birches that flourish here, were not more forward than those we had seen in the valleys about a fortnight earlier.

The day after this, a dense mist hung upon the water all the early part of the morning, and obscured the coasts upon both sides from the view. During this state of the atmosphere, we drove against a low island, but this accident caused us only a short detention. By eight o'clock, the weather began to clear; and as our view extended, we found ourselves drifting among islands, so numerous that the shores of the river which were here generally low, were still not definable. In the middle of the day, however, we drifted by a high cliff upon our left hand. After this, the scene resembled that which is observed in some of the broader channels, but oftener near the entrances of several of the larger rivers of the world, such as the Rhine and the Nile. Many low islands of considerable extent appeared, with narrow channels between them. Later in the day, as the mists wholly dispersed, upon our right hand, there

was no appearance of hills of any considerable elevation, whether far or near; but upon the left, a chain of mountains of irregular forms, was apparent at the distance of thirty or forty versts.

As the night approached, while the sun was gradually diminishing his distance from the horizon, in his oblique and rapid course from the western point of the heavens towards the north, the spectacle was most gratifying to behold. So gradual is his descent at this season in this latitude, after the first three hours past noon, that as he now approached the misty peaks of the high land in the north-west, while we glided swiftly down the stream, he presented to us the appearance of a luminous globe that was rolling along the ridge of the mountains in the midst of volcanic vapours and terrestrial fires.

At length, we obtained the first sight of Yakoutsk. The town is seated within an inlet or little channel of the river, formed by a marshy island, and through which a very little current flows, and at the distance of about a verst from the main stream. All possible efforts were now made to direct our unwieldy craft through the channels between the islands we had still to pass, to gain the proper position required, in order to approach the shores before we might, by the force of the current, be swept beyond the town; and, early in the evening, we were near the prime object of our long expectation.

As soon as we were clear of the main current of the great stream, we landed a part of our crew, in order to track our vessel to the town. And now, late on the evening of the 1st day of June, or the 13th by our style, and the twenty-fourth day after leaving Irkoutsk, and the twenty-first from that of our embarkation, we moored in safety by the bank in front of the town of Yakoutsk.

## CHAP. XVI.

### YAKOUTSK.

Position of the Town.—Population.—Institutions.—Language.—Prospective of a Country that does not produce Food for its Inhabitants.—Commerce.—Fur-trade.—Character of the Inhabitants.—Facility with which the Russians mingle with the conquered Tribes.—Lesson for ourselves.—Conversion of the Yakoutes to Christianity.—Landing at the Town.—Promenade Description.—Antiquities.—Full Day at Midnight.—Arrival of Lieut. Rosenburg.—Dinner at the Governor's.—Company.—Retired Captain.—Romish Priest.—Swiss Lady.—Visit to Lieut. Rosenburg.—Preparations for their Journey.—Exercise on Horseback.—Terrors of the Journey.

YAKOUTSK is the capital of the department of the same name, which is the largest of the provinces of Eastern Siberia. It lies in the latitude of 62 degrees north, and beneath the meridian of 129° 40′ east of Greenwich. It is the most northern of the provincial capitals of Siberia, and is the place of residence of the civil governor of the department, and of an *ispravnik* and a *gorodnichii*. It possesses a population estimated at 4000 souls, composed of the mingled race of Russo-Siberians and Yakoutes, with a few pure Russians, who are chiefly officials in the service of the government and of the Russian Fur Company, and one or two merchants.

Of those institutions, which are the most important of all that properly belong to civilised life, the establishments for the instruction of the rising generation, there are at Yakoutsk only two very meanly appointed schools. One of these is, however, a general school, similar to the establishments in the larger towns, though it is without

the privileges with which the gymnasium of Irkoutsk is endowed. The other is a school intended for the instruction of boys designed for the church, and especially for the mission among the aboriginal inhabitants of this part of the country. But though the climate should for ever restrain the increase of the inhabitants of these districts of Siberia within limits too narrow to afford scope for the attainment of any high degree of refinement, even this little step in the right direction is gratifying to behold.

At the general school, there were at this time only twenty boys, and four or five girls, and at that for the clergy, only about eight or ten boys. At the former of these schools, nothing was yet taught but reading and writing in the Russian tongue, the language of the Yakoutes not having yet been sufficiently reduced to rules, to admit of its being studied by other means than practice and the ear. The scholars, however, at this school are chiefly Yakoutes and children of the mixed race; but those at the clerical school, are for the most part of the purely Russian race.

The Yakoute language, nevertheless, in all the ordinary transactions of life, is here greatly predominant over the Russian, and it is said to be easily acquired. The Russians, indeed, even those who are in the service of the government, and not permanently established, are fond of the language, and acquire it with that wonderful facility with which their fellow-countrymen in Russia Proper acquire all the polite languages of Europe. A lady, whom I shall have again to mention, willing one day to compliment my nation, as I am bound to suppose, after speaking of her progress in the predominant tongue at Yakoutsk, said, "The Yakoute language, I assure you, sir, is esteemed here just in the same manner that the English is esteemed at St. Petersburg." It might hardly have been polite,

when the lady's intention was taken into account, seem to see any thing incongruous in the comparison.

But admirable as we must acknowledge to be every effort of men towards communicating the blessings they enjoy to those especially who remain still in the condition, probably, almost as low as that of the first of our species, it is impossible to sojourn among the inhabitants of this unfavoured region of our planet, and contemplate alone the fair side of the picture of their prospective condition. The country, which does not produce food for its inhabitants, without the application of a degree of labour wholly disproportionate to the results of the same labour elsewhere, must rise and decline with the increase and diminution of the accidental sources of its existence. We in England, indeed, though the comparison may not be much happier than that which has just been mentioned, although we are not fed entirely by the produce of our own soil, make up for the deficiency by a means which we hope will be perpetual, or endure to a period the most remote to which it may be the duty of finite beings to study the interests of posterity. The inhabitants of this part of Siberia are, indeed, in like manner, for the present, in some measure compensated for the privations to which they are subjected on account of the rigour of their climate, by the possession of an article of commerce in the produce of their forests. This source of their maintenance will, nevertheless, decrease in proportion to the increase of their numbers, and must finally fail them. By the fur trade, indeed, they mainly now exist; or at least by this trade, their condition has become superior to that in which the natives were found at the conquest of the country; and with its extinction, which the increase of inhabitants in northern Europe generally, and the consequent increase of the demand for the furs in which they clothe themselves, will sooner or later accomplish,

this cold region will cease to produce the means of maintaining men in sufficiently dense communities to admit of that state of society in any of its degrees, which we term civilisation.

Yakoutsk is at present the centre of the fur trade of Siberia, and is annually the depository of furs to the amount of upwards of two millions of rubles. Salt and talc are here also exchanged for merchandise consisting chiefly of such articles as those of which, it will be remembered, our cargo consisted.

Notwithstanding the somewhat heterogeneous materials which compose the population of this provincial town, to the eye of a stranger, the inhabitants appear to be almost wholly Yakoutes, on account of the features of the face, in particular, of that race being more distinctly marked than those which distinguish the proper Russians. The proportion of Yakoutes, however, of unmingled blood, does not exceed a quarter of the population. The mixed race, in the light in which they are chiefly seen by strangers, seem quite conformists to all Russian usages, though this is not in all things in reality the case. At their homes, and in their domestic affairs, and in their language, they are Yakoutes; while in their religion, and in regard to the social rights which they have been admitted to enjoy, they are not now distinguished from their fellow-subjects even of the pure Russian race.

Allusion has been before incidentally made to the greater facility, in comparison with other races, with which the Russians of the Sclavonic family mingle with the aborigines of the countries, which have been brought within the compass of their dominion. Evidence of this is to be seen in all parts of the Russian empire, but no where more clearly than in Eastern Siberia, and in no part of Eastern Siberia so remarkably as in this ancient territory of the Yakoutes. By this

happy disposition in the character of this race, many nations of different origin, which the vast empire embraces, have been subjected to the discipline which has rendered them capable of enjoying the advantages of equal laws and equal rights. Thus the conquerors have been saved from the stain on their national character which rests upon that of the Spanish name, and from the inconveniences which our pride of blood has occasioned us, and the empire from the internal wars which under any other state of things would have arisen, and retarded the increase of population, and the general diffusion of civilisation which, in the degrees we have seen, or are to see, have marched hand in hand from the Baltic Sea even to the Pacific Ocean.

But at the same time, while at Yakoutsk we find the best example of these happy consequences of this accommodating disposition of the Russians, it is here also, that in comparing the Russian conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country with the conquests of other nations of which history affords us ample examples, we discover the more essential moral causes of the different results that the sequel of their several wars has produced. The Spaniards, whose conquests form the greatest contrast with those of the Russians, carried before them the cross, for which they opened a passage by the sword, and by worse means, carrying on exterminating war against all who submitted not blindly to their authority, and embraced not the faith which was to them a religion of blood with no other moral than that which recognised the right of the strong to commit every kind of violence against the weak. The Russians, wiser, and better endowed with the true spirit of the religion they profess, have carried with them also the same emblem of peace and good-will from Heaven towards man. But the means by which they have opened the passage for the symbol of their faith, and

by which they have planted it in new soils, has been justice and equal rights, for the firm establishment of which their tolerant spirit has been the pledge. Thus, while the Spaniards lighted the flames of war and hatred which are far from being extinguished even at this day, and afterwards converted to Christianity only in name, the feeble remains of the people whom they nearly destroyed, the Russians have by their humanity subdued and reclaimed whole nations of far more barbarous races than any which the Spaniards encountered, and added them to the number of which their empire consists, and to whom their laws and their protection extend.

Wheresoever, indeed, we find the Sclavonic in contact with any other race, we observe the mingling of the two people bear a due proportion to the advance of Christianity, and that advance also, to bear its proportion to the greater or less amount of the charity with which it has been promulgated, after making allowance for the degree of firmness with which the ancient religion of the people has been found established, and the proportion of good sense and absurdity with which it originally abounded. Thus, for instance, where the ancient faith has been found accompained with regular codes of scriptural law, and to have a regular clergy both studious and sincere, such as in the case of Islamism and also of Buddhism, of which the Tatars form the example of the first, and the Bouriats of the second of these religions, the conversions and mixing of blood have been slow; whereas, among those nations whose established religion has not presented any such rampart against the assaults of a purer faith, but has been found full of such abominations as men in all stages of civilisation wonder at observing in their own species, the rapidity of the conversions and the mingling of races has been proportionally greater.

In the case, indeed, of the conversion and adoption of this particular people whom we are now among, the world has seen, or at least history will record, a novel of a very rare kind, and to which the traveller, though he is not in possession of sufficient information to enable him to speak with exactness concerning the formal proceedings by which it appears to have been accomplished, can bear testimony is a reality. It may be said, almost without a figure, that a whole nation of idolaters have been converted to the religion of civilised man by the decree of a Christian prince. The religion of the Yakoutes was mere idolatry of the grossest description, and the superstitions by which it was accompanied, were, in general, such as were not difficult to eradicate. But when the way had been prepared for this decree by the Russian popes, suddenly like a meteor, and which brings to our minds the conversions of Constantine and the apostle of the Gentiles, a ukase proclaimed that the good and loyal nation of the Yakoutes were thought worthy to enter, and were consequently admitted into the Russian Church, to be henceforth a part of the Czar's Christian family, and entitled to all the privileges of the rest of his children. Now although we cannot look into the seeds of time, and "say which grain will grow, and which will not," it is at least certain, that the Yakoutes have been ever since rapidly advancing towards that degree of civilisation which the country they inhabit may be supposed capable of admitting.

Not a doubt remains of the sincerity of the converts generally among the Yakoutes. We shall see cause, however, upon another stage of our journey to think otherwise of some that are removed from the example and influence necessary to attain the desired end. This, nevertheless, withdraws nothing from the principle which has been held to have governed the Russian

quests, or of the fruits generally of which it has n productive.

In fine, if we are able to draw no other moral from a iew of the past and the present condition of the akoutes, than that which the contemplation of the its of moderation and charity in religious affairs fords, we at least learn that no such law exists in ature as that which, when the Tungouse were menoned a few pages back, was said to be supposed by ome to govern the contact between a people in advance n the degrees of civilisation, and a race only yet in the nfant stages of society. But perhaps to no people can such a lesson as that which is taught in the general history of the contact between the Russians and the barbarous races, be more useful than the English, who, "however we do praise ourselves," have stronger and more groundless scruples than any other people concerning the mixture of our blood with a race we deem inferior to ourselves.

As we landed at Yakoutsk, there were a dozen or two men and women gathered upon the shores of the little port. The costume of the men we observed differed very little from that of the Siberians generally, but that of the women was novel to us. The men wore skins, cut in imitation of the caftan, trousers, fur caps, and short boots of untanned leather; but the women were dressed in very short caftans, also of skins, with a border of the breadth of half the length of the skirt in scarlet cloth, and enormous bear-skin caps. They also had the short boots of untanned leather; but their legs were bare, like those of our Highland *men*.

The merchant and myself obtained apartments as soon as we landed, in one of the houses close to the bank, at which our vessel, doomed to be in a very few days converted into a house to shelter some Yakoute family from the winter's cold, was now moored. Our

quarters thus secured, and it being too late for busin we set out for a stroll round the town, full of the s agreeable feelings that most people, after a long voy experience during the first moments of freedom up *terra firma*, of the enjoyment of which they have be so long deprived.

We found the streets of the town laid out with th same regularity as those of the greater part of th towns both in Russia and Siberia, and the tow divided into two nearly equal parts by a brook of very limpid water, for which space enough, however, has been left for a fine river to flow, with a public promenade on either side.

We counted during our walk, six churches, all of which had been painted in the usual yellow and green, but none of them had much remaining of this mark to distinguish them from the ordinary houses of the town. There is also a convent here, with a church belonging to it; and there are some remains of an old Cossack fortress, which is said to have been erected by the conquerors of Siberia so long ago as 1647.

We found nearly all the town, save the building above mentioned, to consist of a sorry set of wooden houses formed of the materials of the craft which descend the Léna, which are broken up for that purpose as soon as their merchandise is landed; and, as none of them seemed to have ever been daubed with paint of any colour, they presented a sombre and miserable appearance. We only observed glass in the windows of one or two of the houses, which we afterwards found belonged to the merchants of the town, all the rest having merely small apertures where talc was used in the place of the more transparent substance. Many of the houses are enclosed within very high palings formed of the same materials as the houses, but which we could not discover were of any other use than the convenience they afford for confining the dogs.

Our tour was not performed without such labour ıd inconvenience as the novelty which the place pre-ɜnted was hardly sufficient to counterbalance, owing to ıe nature of the ground upon which the town appears ɔ have been somewhat injudiciously built. The houses re nearly all, in fact, set upon a mere morass; and the now which had lain upon this during the winter, had ɔnly lately melted; and the heat of the sun for the last two or three days had so dried the surface, while the ground beneath still retained its moisture, that an elastic crust had been formed upon it, that rendered walking most laborious and fatiguing.

In consequence of this inconvenience, we occupied more time in our walk than we were aware of, and when we returned to the shore, we found our men all asleep, though the sun was above the horizon. However, upon consulting our time-pieces, we discovered by the hour, that the ever-welcome source of light had just risen upon another day, instead of being, as we had supposed, just about to set upon that of our arrival. The sun in fact, at this season, in this latitude, disappears but for a brief time; and, as his lowest descent beneath the horizon, is not equal to that when we still enjoy twilight, there is no diminution of the full light of day at any time during the night; and as a bright and red sky had covered the whole northern quarter of the heavens during his absence, we had not missed his rays, nor had we any idea that we had commenced another day, until our attention was called to the time, and our watches indicated the hour of half-past one in the morning. Upon this discovery, we retired to take our necessary rest.

During the course of to-day, Lieutenant Rosenburg arrived with his family; and I had the satisfaction of hearing from him, that the little adventure at Vintimskaya had caused great regret to every one of all classes of the

people whom he had met since its occurrence. His feelings upon the occasion have been already reported.

Upon the following day, I accompanied the gallant lieutenant in a visit to the government-house. We found the governor at home, and we met with the accustomed polite reception. The next day we dined by invitation with his excellency, and met the leading resident people of Yakoutsk, consisting chiefly of the *chinovnik* of the town. There was only one, however, of the company, besides the lieutenant, with whom I was able to converse. This was a Swiss gentleman by birth, and, I believe, an Israelite, but some time a captain in the imperial army, and now, in reward for his services in the wars in the Caucasus, promoted to serve the government in the capacity of post-master at Yakoutsk. I confess I thought this rather a strange reward for a soldier after a campaign, until I was informed, that when appointments of this kind are made, they are for five or three years only, and that they qualify those who creditably discharge their duties during that term, for higher employments in Russia.

There was also, at this dinner, a Romish priest, who had come from Irkoutsk, where he usually resided. He had been long accustomed to make this voyage every two or three years, to confess a small detachment of his widely scattered flock that resided here, and which only amounted to six souls. This was certainly to be deemed a meritorious example of devotion to that church, when it is considered how great must be the difficulties of the ascent of this rapid river, the smooth descent of which only has been described in the foregoing chapters. And when I conversed with the priest upon this subject, with the aid of a friend, I could not help recommending him to insist with the members of his little flock, as an additional motive for them to live without sin, that the sufferings which they

entailed upon another, were greater than the pleasure which their sins would probably afford them; or, if this were not likely to succeed, that some means should be tried to accomplish the important business by correspondence. The church whose priests are proud, when pride will advance their objects, and the meekest of mankind, when meekness will better effect their purposes; whose emissaries terrify the prince by their threatened anathemas, and flatter the beggar by their humility, and which boasts of its capability to adapt its institutions to every condition of man, might surely better accommodate itself to the circumstances of a country, of which it perhaps possessed no map at the time of the great councils and convocations.

The next morning, I called upon the captain above mentioned. He had, while at the Caucasus, married a lady of German descent, from whom I now met a polite reception. The lady was looking forward with much anxiety towards the moment when they might ascend the Léna, and return to Russia to enjoy once more the comparatively temperate air of their native climate, and meet again their long-parted friends.

The captain's house was a sample of the better sort of houses of the town. The dwellings at Yakoutsk of every description are warmed precisely in the same manner as those of the comparatively milder districts of Siberia. The chief variation in them consists in adapting the windows to meet the greater degree of cold which is here experienced above that in the towns where we have already seen so many precautions taken. The windows of the captain's house which looked upon the miniature port, and faced the south, were at this season of the ordinary size; but they were so contrived that, during the winter, they might be contracted to a round aperture of not above a foot in diameter, in which treble glass panes resisted the approach of the enemy. The houses

of an inferior class, however, have no other windows than similar apertures, in which talc supplies the place of glass in summer, and ice in winter. At the commencement of the severer season, pieces of ice from one to two feet in thickness, or, more properly, in length, cut into the right form, are placed in the apertures, and fixed quite firmly, by pouring water into the interstices, just as molten lead might be poured upon less dissolvable substances for the purpose of cementing them, and with the same effect.

In the houses of the inhabitants of the Russian race, this means of forming the windows is sometimes attended with a little inconvenience, on account of the heat kept up in the rooms causing the ice to drip. Such, nevertheless, is the intensity of the cold, that even when a room is heated to 16 or 17 degrees, the ice may remain dry. This, indeed, is no more than we see in much less cold climates, where the ice, as every one who has been in Canada in the winter time will remember, remains sometimes an inch thick on the windows in an atmosphere of equal temperature to that above mentioned. In the houses of the natives, the ordinary heat kept up, is not sufficient to take any effect upon ice of which a portion is necessarily exposed to the external air. About 8 degrees has been before mentioned as that in which the Bouriats delight in the winter time; but I was informed that the heat most agreeable to the Yakoutes at the same season was about 5 or 6 degrees; and, moreover, that when the thermometer was at the freezing point, they did not always take the trouble to procure artificial heat. It must be remembered, however, that the dresses of both these races are formed of the skins of beasts, and not of the produce of the loom.

No very brilliant light can of course be obtained at any time of day through such a medium; but, as

lamps are necessarily kept burning for twenty-one hours out of the twenty-four during the severer season in this latitude, the houses might almost as well be without windows as with them at that time.

I next made a visit to my naval friend. On arriving at his domicile, I found his wife and a child and two women servants preparing for their journey across the country to the ocean. Gospojah Rozuelung and her maidens were in dreadful spirits at the prospect before them. The lady herself, indeed, had been accustomed to long voyages and painful journeys; but the report of the character of the journey before them had quite subdued her wonted courage. The distance from Yakoutsk to Ayan, the new settlement of the company before mentioned, is about the same as that which we had to perform. But they did not calculate upon accomplishing their journey, on account of the character of their party, in less than sixty days, which would be more than double the time allowed for ours; and during the whole of this period they would necessarily be encamped in a desert and dangerous country. A well-armed man, indeed, on either side of each of the women and the child was indispensable, on account of the close character of the woods in many places, and the number and the fierceness of the bears, which rendered necessary the constant watch and guard of men whose quickness as well as coolness might be depended upon.

It may be easily supposed, that this new life for two months required some previous training; and for this purpose, the lieutenant had turned a spacious enclosure which was attached to the house in which he was lodged, into a kind of military riding-school, in which the party were now about to perform their first exercises. The lady had once been accustomed to horse exercise; but she had not mounted for nine years, and she was now very timid in sitting her horse.

The child was snugly stowed in a basket, which was lashed upon the horse's back. But the maidens of the party were the great difficulty. One of them had never been on horseback before, and she was now only placed upon her saddle to be taken off again weeping with terror, as well for the present as for the thought, no doubt, of the future; so that it was doubtful whether she would be able to attempt the journey.

At length, after very much ado, the rest sat firmly enough on their horses for a first trial; and, as soon as they had made a few turns round the court, the men of the party mounted also, and fell into the regular order of the future march. The lieutenant and a Yakoute, both armed, the lieutenant with a tomahawk and pistols, and the Yakoute with dagger alone, preceded the rest. After these came the lady and her child and the more courageous of the two maidens, guarded by Yakoutes on either side. And in this manner they moved on with slow and solemn march round the court, so sad and sorrowful, that they looked more like a cavalcade of the tired soldiers of some barbarian chief conducting a captive beauty with her maidens to a place of security, than a party training for defensive war with the wild beasts during a voluntary journey. The whole of the party, however, with the exception of the most timid of the maidens, who could not be persuaded to sit upon her horse that day, after an hour or two's practice, went very well through their exercise for a first essay.

## CHAP. XVII.

### YAKOUTSK—*continued.*

**Weather.**—Variations of Temperature.—Duration of the Frost in the Ground.—Suggestion concerning the Theory and Causes of the Variations of Climate.—Captain Parry's Voyages in the Polar Seas.—Apparent Eccentricity of the Causes that govern the Temperature of the Atmosphere.—Discursive Remarks.—Effects of the Elevation of the Land.—Influence of Proximity to the Sea.—Suggestions concerning the Influence of internal Heat.—Results of Experiments.—Suppositions concerning the Result of further Experiments.—Questions concerning the Equality of the Thickness of the Crust of the Earth.—Aurora Borealis.—Unequal Temperature of the Siberian Rivers.—Remains of Animals.—Hopes of finding our missing Countrymen.—Delay.—Last Visit to Lieut. Rosenburg.—Preparations of his Family for Departure.—Religious Ceremony before commencing a Journey.

THE weather had been extremely variable during the first days of our detention at Yakoutsk. Sometimes a scorching sunshine during the greater part of the day, was succeeded by a cold wind and rain in the evening; and the thermometer did not, after our arrival, indicate more than 11 degrees of heat, until the seventh of the month, when it rose to 13. On the ninth, it stood at 15 at eight o'clock in the morning, and at 16 at noon, and on the tenth at 16 in the morning and 17 at noon, with every appearance of settled weather.

From the time that I had heard at Krasnoyarsk of the perpetual duration of the frost in the ground there in particular situations, I was anxious to ascertain to what distance the cold penetrated in these regions

generally, before it was arrested by causes very different from the sun's heat. At Irkoutsk no one appeared to know more than every body knew at Krasnoyarsk, which was merely, that in all this part of Siberia the frost remained perpetually in the ground in places sheltered from the direct beams of the sun. At Yakoutsk, however, I was shown a well sixty feet deep, the water in which was never frozen, but rose at all times two feet from the bottom. This depth, therefore—that is to say, about fifty-eight feet—must be considered to be here the limit of the frozen ground. Now, although very little may be inferred from this circumstance singly, and though the truth may be very difficult to determine with exactness; yet, as the fact alone of the perpetual duration of the frost in the ground to most assuredly a considerable depth, is a circumstance calculated to throw light upon the theory of climate, a few remarks which it suggests may perhaps be made without any danger of their being uncharitably interpreted.

The excess of cold and its effects in Siberia naturally bring back to the mind of a traveller in that country, what he may have read with interest concerning the cold experienced by our navigators in the Arctic Sea. I remember when perusing the accounts of the voyages of Captain Parry in that sea, while residing in a cold climate in North America, being much struck with the proportionally small number of degrees in the difference of the cold between parallels of latitude so widely apart as that which I then inhabited and those of the observations of the navigator, and I have been no less so by the same circumstance while in this country.

I did not obtain any actual register of the degrees of cold and heat experienced at Yakoutsk during the year; and not being there at the season at which any

observations could be made concerning the cold, I rely, in the statement to follow, upon the best authority that could be obtained at the time I was there.

The temperature of the atmosphere during the winter, was a subject of frequent conversation upon almost all occasions upon which I met my friends, and especially at the government-house. There was at this time but one spirit thermometer in the place, but there had been at various times several others, and it was agreed by all who had ever taken an interest in this question, or made any definite observations, that there was during the severer months of the winter season here sometimes as much as 45 degrees of cold of Réaumur for a fortnight together, and that there was not unfrequently 48 degrees, and that occasionally the thermometer fell even to 50 degrees. It will be remembered that we are in the 62nd degree of north latitude, and under the meridian of 129° 40′ east of Greenwich.

Upon turning to Captain Parry's account of his several voyages in the Polar Seas, it will be found that the greatest degree of cold that he experienced during the first voyage occurred on the 14th and 15th of February, 1820, in Winter Harbour, Melville Island, in the latitude 74° 45′, upon which days the thermometer fell to 48 and 50 degrees below the zero of Fahrenheit.

During the first of two winters which he spent in these seas upon the second voyage, the greatest degree of cold that he experienced was 37 and 37½ degrees, which occurred in the latitude of 66° 15′ on the 20th and 21st of January, 1822. And during the second winter of the same voyage, on the three first days of January, 1823, at Igloolik, in the latitude of 69½, the thermometer fell to 45 degrees.

During the third voyage at Port Bowen, in Prince

Regent's Inlet, in latitude 73° 13′, the thermometer on the coldest day, which was the 12th of January, fell to 37° 5′.

If we now reduce the degrees of the scale of Réaumur to those of Fahrenheit, we cannot, indeed, fail to be surprised at the difference of the temperature of the two regions, in which the distinct series of observations were made.* The greatest cold experienced by Captain Parry appears by the above account to have been 50 degrees of Fahrenheit, although during two winters he did not experience more than 37° 5′. Now, upon the best authority that could be obtained, it has been above stated, that from 40 to 45 degrees of Réaumur is not an uncommon temperature at Yakoutsk, and that the thermometer sometimes even falls to 50 degrees of the same scale. Now by reduction of the degrees of the scale in use in Siberia to those of that used by our navigators, we find that 50 degrees of Réaumur is equal to 80½ of Fahrenheit, which shows the cold at Yakoutsk, in the latitude 62 degrees (supposing the information upon which I have relied to be correct), to be 30½ degrees of Fahrenheit greater than that of 74 degrees of latitude in the Polar Sea.†

* I have not been able to find any comparative table of these two modes of ascertaining the temperature that is graduated below 40 degrees of Fahrenheit and 32 of Réaumur, which are equal; but in the "Encyclopædia Metropolitana" will be found the following simple rule for reducing the degrees of one scale to those of the other.

$$R = \tfrac{4}{9} \quad (F - 32.)$$
$$F = \tfrac{9}{4} \quad R + 32.$$

† Since the above was written, the interesting and instructive despatches of Captain M'Clure have been published, and they remarkably confirm the principle which we are seeking to find established, for the purpose of making a few remarks thereupon, though the cold he experienced in lat. 74° 6′ 30″ was greater by 15 degrees of Fahrenheit, than the greatest mentioned by Captain Parry, which reduces our above excess of 30½ to 15½. These

In contemplating this great difference in the degrees of cold in these two high latitudes, the question arises, Whence proceeds this apparently so great deviation from the ordinary course of nature in the lower latitudes? The first suggestion, in answer to this question, which might probably occur to most minds, would proceed from the well-known inequality of the temperature of the atmosphere, in the same parallels of latitude, in the different longitudes, apparent in the most especial manner, between that upon the land and that upon the sea, but also in the variations upon the land, in proportion to the distances of given places from the sea.

The effects of this great inequality are chiefly seen in the temperate zone, in the variation of temperature between the eastern and western coasts of the two great terrestrial portions of the globe, proceeding from the prevalence of westerly winds, by which these coasts of both continents experience the influence of the higher temperature of the sea, across which the winds blow, even to a great distance in the interior, with sufficient regularity to render to a certain extent differences of longitude the same in effect as differences of latitude, wherever there are no especial causes, such as the elevation of the land and the course of other winds, to counteract the general effects of the prevailing winds of the same latitudes.

The elevation of the land, indeed, would be the next cause that would suggest itself for the solution of the difficulty. But this is very partial in its effects, and we know that there are no very high lands, of any extent

despatches add, moreover, a new proof of the constancy of the law of the lower temperature of the land compared with that of the sea by the captain's account that the greatest cold which he experienced was always with the wind S.S.W., which was off the land, and that the thermometer invariably rose when the wind was from the Polar Sea.

at least, either in the immediate district of Siberia, of which we are speaking, or in the places of the above observations in the Arctic Sea. When, also, we consider the well-known causes which explain sufficiently the difference of the temperature upon the coasts of the continents, and that of the countries remote from the sea in the temperate zone, we are naturally led to apply the same causes equally to the higher latitudes. Putting aside the former of these causes, and regarding the second and more probable, we are led to the presumption of there being an extensive open sea in the direction of the west, from the sites of the observations of our navigators. But we are here met by the well-known fact, that all the aqueous portion of the globe in the latitudes of which we are speaking, is covered with ice at the season at which the above observations were made. To other causes, therefore, we must look for this apparent eccentricity in the operations of Nature, in her arrangement of the different climates and the varied temperature of the globe.

Let us first then with this view, inquire whether it be yet established, that the temperature of the atmosphere generally, or of that of the different parts of the globe, is wholly dependent upon the great external cause, the solar heat, regulated and modified by the inclination of the axis of the earth, and the causes before mentioned, or whether sufficient discrepance be not apparent in the conclusions drawn upon this supposition to admit at least of great probability, that the climates and the temperature of the atmosphere of different parts of the globe are considerably influenced also by internal causes.

It is remarkable, that in observing the difference of the temperature between the higher latitudes of the southern and northern hemispheres, upon which the sun equally shines, we find that that which, for the

vant of an equal proportion of land, we should, according to the seemingly established laws above mentioned, have expected to find the warmest, is in fact the coldest. Now many of the great natural philosophers, for reasons which we must accept, suppose that the solid substances which we find upon the earth's surface form only a crust of from thirty to 200 miles in thickness, over a mass of matter in a state of fusion. Nevertheless, though there should be no doubt concerning the state of the interior of the globe, the experiments which have hitherto been made, seem to be wholly inconclusive in respect to the equality of the thickness of the crust of the earth, on account of the contracted field of the experiments. The greater part of these appear to have been made in our deepest coal mines in Durham and Northumberland, where it has been observed, that the heat increases in proportion to the descent, at the rate of 1 degree Fahrenheit for every thirty-four English feet. Other experiments have however been made, particularly in the lead and silver mines in Saxony, where the proportion of increase of heat with the descent has been found to be 1 degree of Fahrenheit for every thirty-five feet. But in other mines in that country, it has been necessary to descend twice that depth for each degree of increase of temperature.

Now, our admirable Lyell in his great work on geology, after speaking of M. Cordier's having made the most extensive comparisons of the different results in different countries concerning the internal heat of the earth, makes these remarks: "M. Cordier announces as the result of his experiments on the temperature of the interior of the earth, that the heat increases rapidly with the depth; but that the increase does not follow the same law over the whole globe, being twice or three times as much in one country as in another, and that these differences are not in con-

stant relation with either the latitudes or longitudes of places. He is of opinion, however, that the increase would not be overstated at about 1 degree Fahrenheit for every forty-five feet." The same M. Cordier is of opinion that the heat of the earth's centre is about 16 times that of melting iron.

Let us now suppose, that the earth were penetrated in a hundred different places to an equal depth to that of the mines in which the experiments have been already made, or no deeper even than to the point at which the cold is first checked and begins to diminish, and especially in the higher latitudes of the two great continents. From this it can scarcely be doubted, would arise new data concerning the thickness of this covering of our burning planet: and if this were found unequal, then the variations of the temperature of the atmosphere might be found to be more or less influenced by comparative distances of different portions of the earth's surface from the grand internal heat.

Now, with regard to the probability of discovering that the crust of the earth is not in all parts of equal thickness, and the surface equally affected, let us make a further reference to the discoveries of science. The form of the earth, we are assured by the mathematicians and astronomers, is that of an oblate spheroid, which the greatest among them found to be the form that, by the established laws of nature, a chaotic mass, such as that of which our now beautiful world once consisted, would certainly take in revolving upon its axis. But it does not appear to have been shown by any natural philosopher, that the rotatory motion of the earth would necessarily cause either inequalities in the thickness of the covering of its surface, or render this invariable; or, which is the same thing, whether the portion of the earth which is still in a state of fusion be or be not, by

hat or by any other cause, precisely of the form of the external surface.

Our great natural philosopher and astronomer, Herschel, in treating of the measurement and dimensions of our planet, calculates its deviation from the pure spherical form, by which it becomes that of an oblate spheroid, to be the $\frac{1}{300}$th part of its diameter at the equator, or about twenty-four miles; which will bring the surface at the poles about twelve miles nearer the centre of the earth than that at the equator. Now, if that portion of the globe which is in a state of fusion, should not be subjected equally to the effects of its rotatory movement, and should not have taken the same form as its external surface, the lands in the higher latitudes will of course be proportionally nearer the heated material which forms the great bulk of our planet.

If we suppose, then, as appears probable, that upon making more extensive experiments, it should be found that those portions of the earth's surface which enjoy so little of the sun's rays, rest upon a thinner shell than that upon which we tread in the temperate zone, we may reasonably conclude that the temperature of the atmosphere would be found to be influenced as well by internal as by external causes.

There is, moreover, a phenomenon, whatever its cause or effects, which may be placed in conjunction with that above mentioned. This is the aurora borealis. What is the cause, we will ask, and whence proceeds that light seen invariably in the north? If it be replied that it is electricity, we must demand again, How is it generated, and why always towards the pole of the earth?

Moreover, if we would further multiply references to unexplained phenomena, we might even name among others that great difference in the temperature of the rivers of Siberia which has been herein noticed.

And again, as a last suggestion concerning the cause of phenomena and known facts and their unknown causes, though not the least important of those that present themselves, let us ask, Who will explain why there are found in this region innumerable remains of animals similar in form to some, yet more prodigious than any, that now inhabit the torrid zone, and which lived since the last great geological revolution, as is evident from the substances in which or amidst which they are found? All those who have attempted to account for this region being once the country of the mammoth, have, for reasons which do not interfere with the freedom of our comparatively unimportant remarks, trod as gingerly at every step of their way, as reputation might walk upon the crust of a volcano of literary criticism; and their conclusions remain proportionally unsatisfactory.

Now, if amidst all this uncertainty concerning these several phenomena in regard especially to the past, it may be permitted to make a single step upon the tempting path of conjecture concerning the future, we would demand, Who is there among us who shall say that we may not by and bye discover our long-lost and regretted countrymen, for whom we have sought so many years in vain, surviving in a climate ameliorated by a great Polar Sea, and in a land producing some fruits of the earth yet unknown to us, and which nourish other organised beings of which we know nothing, even up to creatures similar—(and who dare conjecture more?)—to ourselves?

The merchant, upon whose movements I was in some degree dependent, was not yet ready. We had no cause, however, to regret this delay, on account of the condition and the character of the country through which we had to pass. Throughout a great portion of the way, we knew that we had to encounter many

obstacles to our progress, such as morass lands, bogs, and swamps, and rivers, and mountains; and this was the season at which the swamps could not fail to be full of water. Thus, as the weather was now fine, what we lost in time, we were sure we should gain in the decrease of the water in the swamps, which it was believed would be the greatest of the difficulties that we were sure every step of our arduous journey would, in one shape or other, present.

The kind family which had followed us upon the Léna, was ready before us. They had completed all their arrangements upon the ninth of the month, and were to commence their sad journey for Ayan, the place of their destination, upon the Sea of Ochotsk, upon the following day; and upon the morning of the tenth, I called to bid them farewell.

Upon arriving at Lieutenant Rosenburg's dwelling, I found his wife, and her child, and the young women that were with her, taking their last training lesson for their dreaded equestrian journey. The lady seemed to have regained the confidence she had anciently possessed, and the young women were now thought sufficiently improved in the skill and courage that were deemed necessary to admit of their commencing their journey with the good hope of happily concluding it. The courage, however, of the lady, though she had regained her firm seat in the saddle, was not quite heroic before the contemplation of the dangers inseparable from such a journey as that before them. The distance was above 1000 versts, and the country which they were about to traverse abounded in forest and morass land, similar to that which we had to encounter, without possessing any settled inhabitants; and it was so infested with bears, as to render all the precautions before mentioned, and constant watch, indispensable. Under the most favourable circumstances, they could not hope to accomplish

the journey in less than between fifty and sixty days, during the whole of which they would be struggling with the difficulties of the way by day, and encamped, be the weather what it might, in a frail tent by night.

But not to guides with pistols, daggers, and other weapons, which we have seen prepared for their protection, did this good family wholly trust for their security. According to the commendable custom of their country, they had fixed upon the hour previous to their departure, to invoke, with the aid of the chief pope of Yakoutsk, the favour and protection of Heaven during the arduous journey; and as the pope, with his assistants, was already in attendance, and the hour appointed for the performance of his sacred offices at hand, I willingly accepted an invitation which was given me to join in their pious duties.

When we were all assembled in the largest apartment in the house, the pope, with his assistants bearing the holy water and some other little appurtenances to Russian worship, took his place in the centre of the room, with the crucifix in his hand and his face turned towards the holy corner, in which a picture hung, while the rest of the party knelt; and in this so lately Pagan land, the simplest adorations of the Christian party were now sung, and their prayers offered up to Heaven for the safety of the travellers, and for the happy issue of their adventurous journey.

The service was in the Sclavonic dialect; but with such simplicity and feeling, and apparent neglect of the enforced ceremonies of the church, were the sacred offices performed, that the language in which the prayers were uttered needed not to be translated, to touch the hearts of all that were present. As the hymn especially, with which the service concluded, was sung, it seemed as if there were nothing wanting to the purity of the worship of our first parents, when

they lowly bowed adoring" Him who out of nothing alled them into being, or of that of men before they irst bowed the knee before gods made by their own ands, or worshipped worse images of their imaginations.

When all our orisons were duly paid, the pope gave us his benediction with a most liberal sprinkling of holy water, of which I received my full complement, and of which I am bound indeed to say, that I was never upon such occasions stinted on account of my nation and religion, and that I never received less of any thing the church had to bestow by way of blessing, than the most pious Russian.

As soon as the touching service was over, the scene changed to worldly affairs, in the immediate preparations for the departure of the travellers; and I now took leave of my amiable friends, and an hour afterwards they set out on their perilous journey.

## CHAP. XVIII.

### JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TOWARDS OCHOTSK.

Departure from Yakoutsk.—Yakoute Guides.—Passage across the Léna.—Commencement of the Land Journey.—Provisions.—Arms.—First Post.—Lakes.—Meadows.—Woods.—Gaiety of our Companions.—Sorrel an important Article of Food.—Crows.—A drunken *Smotritel*.—Remedy in Use.—Fine Weather.—Storm.—Curlew.—Solitude.—River Amginsk.—Swamp.—Islet in the Swamp.—Sufferings of our Horses.—Mosquitoes.—Squall.—Hut of Hexagonal Form.—Mode of passing Horses over a River.—Worse Swamps.—Ancient Causeways.—Sagacity of our Horses.—Ducking in the Swamp.—Another Sort of Oasis.—Remarkable Character of the Place and its Inhabitants.—The *Smotritel's* Account of himself.—Effect of the Place upon ourselves.—Continue our Journey.

On the evening of the 12th of the month, I took leave of the governor and the Russian captain, and upon the morning of the 13th, my companion of the Léna and myself set off for the place of our destination upon the Ochotsk Sea. The thermometer, that had on the 11th risen to 19 and 20 degrees of heat, and on the 12th to 21 and 22 degrees, with calm and clear weather, had this morning fallen, during a heavy shower of rain and a north-west wind, to 18 degrees.

At about eight o'clock, we embarked with our necessary baggage of tent and cooking apparatus, and some provisions, on our passage across the Léna, upon the opposite bank of which we were to meet the horses that had been provided for our journey. About mid-day we reached Tarmouska, about seven versts from Yakoutsk, where we found the horses awaiting our arrival. There was no habitation here save a Tungouse

wigwam, which was occupied by the *smotritel* who furnished us with horses, and was placed in the middle of a piece of meadow land a few acres in extent, which was surrounded by stunted firs, chiefly spruces.

We were detained at Tarmouska, in making our various minor arrangements, until two o'clock in the afternoon, at which hour we commenced our journey. No precautions appeared to have been neglected, whether for our security, or to enable us to obtain such comforts as circumstances might admit, or against ordinary accidents upon the way. We had five horses, three of which carried the same number of Yakoute guides and attendants, as well as our necessary baggage, the chief part of which was packed in small cases covered with hides, to keep out the water in which we knew we should be plunging, both in the swamps and in the rivers which we had to wade during our journey. But our beds, as they could not be conveniently stowed in a small compass and kept dry, and might tend by their bulk to impede our progress through the scrubby woods, with which many parts of the track abounded, we were obliged to abandon.

To make provision for the wants of nature in the way of food, had not been the least of our difficulties. Weight and bulk were here also to be considered, besides fitness for preserving in a state for use. This part of the arrangements, in particular, fell into the hands of my companion; but he was able to add very little to some bread in the form of biscuits, and a good supply of the dried ribs of mutton, that still remained of the stock which we had provided before leaving Irkoutsk.

Mutton thus preserved is an article of food much used by travellers in Eastern Siberia; but it has little to recommend it, beyond its extreme lightness, which is scarcely exceeded by that of cork, and its exemption

from the liability to spoil; or if we add, by its capacity to fill up the "aching void" in a traveller's stomach, this is the utmost that can be said in its favour. The sheep, generally, of Siberia, are very poor animals. In fact, after those we saw on our journey to Tomsk under the guard of the Kirgeeze, I met nothing worthy the name of the poorest species we have in Europe. Such as are to be had, however, are killed in the autumn, and the ribs are dried in the ovens of the Siberians, just as the stock-fish are dried by the Swedes and Norwegians in the sun; but certainly, however, with less success. Seamen, after laying a stock-fish upon the shank of the anchor, and thumping it well with a sledge-hammer or crowbar, contrive to make it somewhat palatable, however little it may contain of real nutriment; but our ribs of mutton, which were a very little thicker than sheets of parchment, were certainly not more agreeable to the taste, and had no more nourishment in them, than might probably be found in an equal weight of that article in case of a scarcity of better food.

With regard to arms, we were furnished much in the same manner as the party that had already departed. The merchant and myself carried tomahawks and fowling-pieces; but the Yakoutes, being accustomed to face the bear, the only enemy for which we might need arms, with the knives with which they cut their meat, which resembled large daggers, and were always ready, disdained the fire-arms with which we would otherwise have provided them, and, therefore, had no addition to their native weapon. Nevertheless, the way having been often travelled by the merchants' light caravans, and a great portion of it furnished with government stations, and some parts peopled by Yakoutes, who killed many bears annually, was less infested with these animals than the country between

Yakoutsk and Ayan, which had to be passed over by the interesting party of travellers whom we have seen making their necessary provision against all the dangers before them. Moreover, as the bears are never met with in parties, like the wolves, which are not found in this part of the country, we were sufficiently provided even to desire the occasional relief of a bear-hunt during the journey, rather than in a condition to dread any attack.

At the distance of two versts from the river, we found a drier soil than that which prevailed where we landed, but producing the same vegetation. Soon afterwards, we observed a few small birches and poplars mingled with the constant firs, and which we found increasing in number and size as we proceeded until we reached Talbyschtatscha, also a government post, at the distance of twenty-eight versts from the river. At this place, we found a *smotritel* snugly housed in a mud hovel, the floor of which was four or five feet beneath the surface of the ground; but, as we were determined to accomplish another stage before we reposed, we made no delay here.

As we proceeded, we passed along the border of a string of small lakes bounded by meadows of about half a verst in breadth on both sides; and we had yet nothing to complain of in regard to the state of the country for travelling. In the evening we reached Tegulinska, at the distance of fifteen versts further on our journey; and here we halted for the night.

We found at this post a Yakoute *smotritel*, who supplied us with a good mess of beef *stchee;* upon which, with the addition of some of our own biscuit, we supped heartily. When we had thus well satisfied our appetites, the Yakoute *chinovnik* conducted us to a small hut, adjoining that which he inhabited, where we laid ourselves down upon some dry benches formed of clay, for our

night's repose. We were kept, however, from sleeping, nearly half the night, by the merriment of the *smotritel* and our men in the other hut, who seemed equally entertaining to each other. But, by this time, we thought it better for the sake of all parties to arrest the flow of humour in which they were so freely indulging; and we summoned our chief guide, who came at the first call, and sent word by him to the rest of the merry party, that we wished them to postpone their stories and their mirth until we were asleep. After this, we had no more noise, and we slept tranquilly until the morning.

The next day, after breakfasting upon the same dish on which we had supped the previous night, we set off with fresh horses; and finding the same description of country, with a continuation of the same chain of small lakes, bordered with meadows and grassy slopes, that were perfectly dry, we encountered no obstruction, and reached the station Tshishikeiska, at the distance of thirty-two versts from that at which we had slept, at an early hour.

As far as the next post, Porotowska, at the distance of thirty-four versts, we passed over the same description of country, and had the same facility of travelling; and we found here a similar lodging to that in which we had passed the previous night.

Upon the third day of our journey, we set off at an early hour with fresh horses, and continued our way by the same chain of small lakes, which it was now quite evident were but the deeper parts of the bed of an ancient grand river, through which the current had ceased to flow, by the drying up of its sources, or a change in the course of the stream, or possibly by some geological phenomenon, such as the raising of the land caused by imperceptible volcanic action. Early in the day we arrived at the post of Tshuraptshinska, at the distance of thirty-two versts from that at which we had

passed the second night of our journey; and soon after mid-day, we reached Arilatska, at a further distance of thirty-two versts from the post last named.

Soon after quitting this post, we passed a little settlement of four Yakoute huts; and in their vicinity we met some children with baskets of sorrel; and we observed in the meadows around the huts several other children occupied in gathering the same green herb. Upon our making inquiry of the Yakoutes that were with us concerning the use made of this herb, they informed us, that it was an important article of the food of the inhabitants of this part of the country at this season of the year.

We saw, upon this day's journey, some crows of the species common in Western Europe, none of which I had before met with in any part of Siberia. In the evening we arrived at Lebeginska, thirty versts from the last post, which completed the longest day's journey that we performed, which was ninety-four versts. This was also the last of the unobstructed portion of the way.

The weather during our journey up to this time had been exceedingly fine, with the thermometer oscillating during the day between 16 and 21 degrees of heat. But during this afternoon, the sun was obscured; and a little before our arrival at this post, a storm of thunder, lightning, and wind commenced, which, before our horses were relieved of their burdens, was attended with such torrents of rain as to make us think ourselves fortunate in being under cover.

There were here a Yakoute hut and a Tungouse wigwam; and upon the merchant and myself entering the former, while our men were relieving the horses of their burdens, we found the *smotritel* and his man lying beside some expiring embers in the centre of the hovel, quite insensible from the effects of the precious *vodka*,

as it was very easy to discover by two bottles that were lying empty upon the ground beside them. We happened, however, to find also a bucket full of water in the hut; and the temptation to employ this, according to an improved means in use in the country for restoring the lost senses of drunkards when their services are required, being irresistible, we poured the whole of the refreshing element over their heads. But as the effect of this was not such as we expected, it was evident that the potations of the jolly couple were too recently swallowed to admit of our now fairly proving the general efficacy of this remedy for intoxication. A little sleep, indeed, before its application, is acknowledged to be as necessary to its success as repose to renew our bodily vigour after fatigue.

As our efforts to restore to their senses these doubtless very good men when awake and sober, were unsuccessful, and as we could find nothing in their hut to make use of, to save our stock of provisions for times of greater need, which we might expect to encounter during the journey, we contented ourselves with what we had; and after our supper, we laid ourselves down upon some dry sticks, arranged for benches, and we passed the night very comfortably.

The next day, which was the fifth of our journey, we left this station and its drunken inhabitants at seven o'clock in the morning, with fresh horses. We had passed the lakes before mentioned without seeing any of the fowl that dip the wing in water; and, up to this time, we had nowhere seen any other birds than the few crows above mentioned. But when we had made about four or five versts of the journey of to-day, as we skirted a small shallow lake in the midst of a narrow meadow, surrounded by a thick spruce forest, the voice of the curlew awakened our recollections of sunnier climes. Two of these birds, so familiar to all who

habit almost every land in the temperate zone, were searching for their food from place to place along the border of the little lake, which seemed as if it were the utmost bounds of the wandering of their species throughout the wide surface of the globe. We thought, at first, of trying to shoot them. But it seemed as if it would have been a crime to destroy one probably, and leave the other to mourn its mate through the season, and for the sake of the tithe of a single meal, which we had no immediate prospect of wanting; so we left them to the enjoyment of the unenviable solitude of the desert.

At about four or five versts from this lake, we encountered the first true sample of the difficulties of the way before us, in the form of a swamp, across which there appeared to have been formerly a causeway, but of which there were now, however, but few remains; and we had to wade pretty deeply in the water and mud to pass over it.

Soon after mid-day, we attained the next post, called Melgagiska, at the distance of twenty-seven versts from that at which we had last slept, and situated upon a drier soil. After this we had the same country of morass land and swamp, until we reached a river called the Amginsk, which is one of the tributaries of the grand river of Eastern Siberia. We crossed this river at a ford known to our guides without dismounting, and without any great inconvenience, although the stream was rapid, and the water up to the horses' chests.

We proceeded now along the banks of this river until we arrived late in the day at the next post, called Amginska, twenty-seven versts distant from the last. We found here a Yakoute *smotritel*, residing in a hut placed in the middle of a piece of pasture land, upon which several cows were grazing. Our men had given us hopes during the day that we should here sup upon

sterlet, with which this river abounds, but we were disappointed. The *smotritel* and his aid had neither hook, line, nor net, to procure any fish whatsoever. But we obtained both *stchee* and milk; and the latter, we thought, better flavoured and richer than any we had tasted in the more southern parts of Siberia. At this river we might consider, as far as distance was concerned, that we had made a good fourth of our journey, being now 284 versts from Yakoutsk, and 761 from the Sea of Ochotsk.

We quitted this post early the next morning. At a few versts from the banks of the river, which we now left behind us, we found ourselves involved in a deep morass, covered with underwood and full of water, in some places above the horses' knees. Our leading guide's anxiety about our passage of the complete bog, which we had now to encounter, was lest any one of the party should get astray from the rest, and perhaps be irrecoverably lost. In order, therefore, to keep us as much as possible under his view, or to enable us to meet again in case of separation, he selected a landmark that was distinguishable at intervals, consisting of some larger-sized trees than those which flourished generally throughout the swamp, and towards these it was arranged that we should all direct our course, whether we were in company, or apart, whenever we could perceive them. There was there too, he informed us, a little spot of ground, which was about mid-distance across this swamp, where we should be able to rest our tired horses.

Soon after mid-day, we reached within about a verst of this desired resting-place; but such was here the state of the swamp, that we were still two hours longer in winding and turning about to pick our way through the mire before we reached it. It was, however, a moment of real enjoyment to us, when our horses

stepped once more upon dry ground; and it could not have been less so to the poor animals themselves; but we knew how soon our pains as well as theirs were to commence anew. However, we removed all the burdens from the backs of our faithful beasts, in order to enable them to obtain as much rest as possible during our stay. For ourselves, we now prepared a little *samovar* that we had with us, that we might refresh ourselves with some tea. But as to the poor horses, rest was all the refreshment they were allowed. They were rigorously treated according to the system already mentioned as established in Siberia; and although they were most in need of food, as well as of repose, and while there was grass under their feet, they were tied to a tree and given nothing. Their sufferings, in truth, had been such as rendered ours, in comparison, beneath notice; for, independent of the difficulties of the ground, they had been teased continually by large horse-flies. Not that there was, however, any want of the flies that prefer human blood; but we had taken more care of ourselves, and were provided with the means of defence against their attacks. We had set off furnished with some close nets, such as are used in the country to protect our faces; and although these were very soon torn to pieces by the branches of the scrubby trees as we rode on, we always found some means or other of guarding ourselves against the inconvenience caused by these insects.

After leaving this little islet or oasis in the swampy wastes, we were overtaken by another thunder-storm, accompanied with hail so heavy, that we thought ourselves fortunate in discovering near us a morsel of dry ground with some trees upon it, of which we determined to take advantage; and we alighted here, and placed ourselves under the shelter of some thickly-sown spruces, until the storm, which was not of long duration,

abated. Upon this piece of ground, and upon several other similar spots that we passed by, as we waded through the water and mud, which became deeper and deeper as we proceeded, we observed the rose flourishing in full bloom. At length, at nine o'clock in the evening, after twelve hours of march, we reached the post of Nochinska, forty-seven versts from the River Amginsk, and situated upon another spot of dry ground.

The hut which we were put into to-night, we remarked, was in form hexagonal, and seemed to have been planned with so much care that it excited our curiosity; and we made an attempt to discover, by the aid of a spare vocabulary of their language which we had made before leaving Yakoutsk, why this novel form had been chosen for a habitation by men of this semi-barbarous race; and we seemed to learn, what we had afterwards the opportunity of observing, that this was the accustomed form of the huts of the Yakoutes in this part of the country.

The night was again tempestuous, with four or five hours of heavy rain; and thus we were a second time fortunate in reaching a place of shelter in good time. In the morning there was great hesitation on the part of the guides concerning our march, arising from the accounts which we here heard of what had been the state of the swamps in our advance before this storm. It became necessary to weigh all the bearings, and consider whether it were not better to remain a day or two with these Yakoutes, than to proceed immediately after this augmentation of the difficulties of the way. It was finally, however, determined that we should make the attempt to proceed.

Soon after quitting the post of Nochinska, we were involved again in the same difficulties as on the previous day. But after an hour's march, we came to the narrow

and deep stream of the River Anga, by the side of which there was a piece of dry ground, upon which stood a hut inhabited by a Yakoute, who kept a canoe, and aided those who passed by in crossing the stream.

Very little care had hitherto been taken to prevent the horses leaving us, when we were passing them across the rivers; but at this place the Yakoutes prepared to take more than their usual precautions, on account of the animals, as they informed us, knowing very well that they were in a country of fine rich pasture at this season, and of their having more than ordinary dread of this deep and rapid river, which rendered it not unlikely that they would attempt to escape as soon as they were unburdened and unbridled for the passage. The plan adopted to secure them, was to tie them together in a line. Then in this manner they were led to the edge of the stream, where they were given the word, at which they all walked into the water and swam to the opposite shore, where, after landing, they stood tranquilly until we had all passed over in the canoe.

After the passage of this river, we came upon another much worse swamp than any of those through which we had hitherto waded. This also exhibited some remains of ancient causeways. I never before witnessed any labour, or patient endurance of pain and fatigue on the part of any horses, that would bear comparison with the labours our poor beasts now performed, and the patience with which they endured their sufferings. The state of the swamps was here such that wherever we found the smallest remains of the former causeways, we took advantage of them. Such, however, was the condition of the greater part of these, that it was a matter of wonder to us to find that our animals preferred crossing them to keeping in the swamp. But it as-

tonished us much more to see the manner in which the intelligent beasts, which, happily, were not iron-shod, found means to profit by them. These causeways had merely consisted originally of three rows of stakes driven into the ground, upon which were laid three parallel lines of logs, across which poles were placed, fastened at their ends with pegs. But wherever any portion of them was remaining, there were not more than half the poles left, and the greater part of these were broken, and lying with one end in the swamp. Nevertheless, our intelligent animals contrived to get over them in a manner that seemed to indicate that they were stimulated by the knowledge, that the more ability they displayed in surmounting these difficulties, the less they would have to encounter of the swamp. Where the poles were broken, and not fallen, they never stepped upon the ends that projected; and when all was in ruin together, they would step upon the exact point of the crossing of such poles as were broken off near the opposite sides, and had one end each across the beam, and the other end in the swamp; and sometimes they would walk along the middle line of the logs, where there were a few ends left to form any kind of support for their feet. But it is impossible to describe all the means by which they contrived to take advantage of the little relief which they here found to their distressing labour.

During the greater part of the passage of this abominable swamp, which was about twenty versts in breadth, we found these remains of causeways on bridges of five or six hundred yards in length, at intervals of a few versts. Sometimes, however, they were wholly too bad to attempt; and at other times they were so high above the surface of the water as to be difficult to mount, and to suggest to us the superior prudence of keeping in the swamp. On one occasion, where it ap-

peared doubtful whether the horses could pass along some of these remains, one of the guides and myself chose to keep the swamp, while the rest of the party allowed their horses to take the other course. Observing, however, that the others appeared to be doing better than we were, and perceiving that my horse's inclination was for the causeway, as soon as I found a place where the water was a little shallower than usual, I gave the animal his will, and he managed to climb upon the frail way. I had, however, badly chosen the place for the experiment; and before the poor beast was able to extricate himself from the dilapidated remains of the logs upon which he found himself standing, he fell through them, crushing all beneath him, into the water and mire. But, fortunately for myself, I was thrown into the swamp, clear of the rafters and broken poles of the causeway; and, although pitched head-foremost in the water, I experienced no greater inconvenience than arose from a dirty cold bath, and a bruise of no great importance. One of the Yakoutes, however, experienced a similar accident with serious bruises, before we got through the same swamp.

Late this evening, we arrived at the post of Aldanska, where we found another dry oasis, something larger than any we had before seen. Besides the relief we felt at reaching this post as a place of rest, our interest was now excited by the peculiar character of the place and of its inhabitants. As we approached the dwelling of the *smotritel*, we observed a dozen horses or more, and about as many cows, grazing upon a rich pasture, which, besides the more cheering hope of the country before us which it excited, gave us assurance that we should neither want *stchee* nor milk for our evening meal, and for the next day at least; and as the bread, and every thing that we had brought with us, save some dried

mutton, was now exhausted, this was not a matter of indifference to us.

We found the official's house, two huts, and several cattle sheds, placed upon a spot of ground a little raised above the meadow, forming, as it seemed to us, quite a settlement. This *smotritel* proved to be a Russo-Siberian. He received us with hospitality, and set every body in his house to work immediately in our service, some to aid our Yakoutes in discharging their beasts, and others in preparing us a meal, and a third party in filling several tubs that stood near the door with clear water from a pool close at hand, that we might refresh ourselves by partial bathing.

Upon entering the good man's house, we found it to consist of several apartments, one of which, if we had been disposed for solitude, we might have appropriated to our exclusive use. But swamps, woods, and travelling, are not bad correctives to that sullenness which makes men in the civilised world think the grades into which they are necessarily divided, much more distinct from one another than they really are; and we preferred the company of all we could collect around us, to sulking morosely alone; and the intercourse which we now had with our host, gave us reason to congratulate ourselves on the choice we had made.

It happened that the merchant's caravan, which preceded us, as we now learned, had already lost in the swamps not less than twenty-two horses, but which the captain of the party had been able to replace here. This had taken so many of the *smotritel's* cattle, that he had some difficulty in providing for our wants. In the meantime, while we were necessarily detained, our host gave us an account of his family and his settlement, which I cannot omit to report.

He had been five and forty years upon this lonely spot of firm earth; and he assured us, that since his ar-

val, he had never, either in summer or winter, ossed the swamps on either side of him. Nearly ie whole of about 100 acres, which the ground eemed to comprise, was covered with pasture; and he nformed us, that his cows and horses grazed here at his season of the year, as secure from the attacks of he bear, as if they had been upon a lone island in the nidst of the sea. The other houses which formed the group, were occupied by members of his family intermarried, male and female, with Yakoutes, by which a little patriarchal settlement had been created.

Not all, however, that this *smotritel* said reached my ear, through the necessary interpretation, so clearly as to enable me to retain the recollection of any thing further, save some expressions of the most enthusiastic attachment of himself and all the members of his family to the domain which they enjoyed, and some observations which he made concerning his impressions of the world beyond his own little empire. To quit this happy oasis, which had been his world and his home since his childhood, to return to it no more, he told us, would be what he could not contemplate, without feelings that would be insupportable to him. Nevertheless, he cherished, he said, the hope of one day making a journey to Irkoutsk, if not to some part of Russia. What he appeared most to wish to see, was a church, of the character of which, he said, if he had ever seen such an edifice, he could retain no recollection. But if he were to visit Russia, he said, it would be chiefly that he might see the holy city of Moscow, with its Kremlin and all its magnificent churches, which he thought every man in the empire ought at least to visit once; and he caused several questions to be put to me, when he was told that I had lately inspected all the wonders of that ancient city.

We ourselves found something unaccountably attract-

ive in this green spot of solid ground in the midst of such interminable swamps. The position upon which the houses were built, it has been already mentioned, was a little elevated; and as we stood in front of them, and overlooked the far-extending morasses on every side, it was difficult for us to determine, whether there was most reason to admire this king of the swamp's resignation to a condition that would at first have appeared to us the greatest of misfortunes, or to envy him his independent empire.

No place during our journey afforded so good an opportunity for repose as this insulated spot of firm ground; and had we at this time passed all the swamps and morasses, we might, with a good conscience, have sat down to enjoy the compensation for our labours in a tranquil rest; but as we heard that we had yet just thirty more versts before us, that were even worse than those we had passed over, we went to bed with a determination to rise early, and to proceed on our journey at our usual hour of departure upon the following morning.

## CHAP. XIX.

### JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TO OCHOTSK—*continued.*

The Prospect before us.—Comparison of the Difficulties for the Horse and the Rider.—Character of the Road.—Excellence of the Horses.—River Aldan.—Swamps of Twenty Versts.—Islet in the Swamp.—More Swamps.—The Worst of all the Swamps.—Remarkable Appearance of the Country around.—Prudence of the Yakoutes.—Signs of Change of Weather.—Consultation.—Descent into the Swamp—Difficulties.—Wonders accomplished by the Horses.—Consultation in the Swamp.—Apprehended Danger.—Choice of Evils.—Resolution to persevere—Renewal of our Hopes.—Patient Endurance of the Horses.—Surpass all former Efforts.—The Passage accomplished.—Exultation.—Encampment.

In the morning, we found the short relief from our ordinary experience of dirty huts and the company of their half-wild inhabitants, had completely refreshed our spirits; and as fresh horses, that had been at pasture since the grass had sprung, were already at the door for our use, we breakfasted, and took leave of the worthy king of the swamps at our accustomed early hour of mounting, to plunge once more among the mire.

These obstructions to the way, as long as they prevailed, were so much the worse for the horses, and the better for their riders, or the contrary, according to the less or greater quantity of rain recently fallen. Wherever the rain had been heavy and recent, there was the more water to wade through, which was rather in favour of the horses, as the mud at the bottom was then less tenacious and less difficult for them to withdraw their feet from as they made their steps; but the rider

was constantly in the water. But where there had been less rain, the mud at the bottom was of a stiff consistence, though the mud and the water together were not so deep; and the labour of the animal was much increased, while the rider was dry, and had only his sympathy with the beast he rode upon to give him pain. The character of the first ten versts of this swamp was of the latter description; and the difficulties of their passage were such as I am convinced that no other horses with whose qualifications I am acquainted, would have surmounted. Subjection to this particular labour through a series of generations down to the present Siberian race of these animals, seems to have adapted them to encounter the peculiar difficulties of the country, and enabled them to perform what horses of the finest races in Europe or Southern Asia would certainly sink under upon the first trial.

In speaking of the Siberian horses in general, when we were in the more southern part of the country, their short and thick legs and their short and broad necks were noticed among the characteristics of their bodily conformation. Those of this region differ only from those of the more southern districts of the country in colour, stature, and weight. The horses of the south are of the same various colours which prevail among those of Europe, the grey being predominant, and black rare; but those of these districts are, with very rare exceptions indeed, all perfectly white; and they are generally shorter and lighter.

The day was half spent before we had marched ten versts; at the end of which we arrived at the River Aldan. This river is broad, shallow, and rapid. But we found a native ferryman, and we made the passage ourselves in his canoe, and swam our horses across the stream without experiencing any difficulty.

After this, we encountered a swamp for twenty

sts, in which the water exceeded in depth and the ad in tenacity any thing we had before experienced. indeed, our wonder and admiration had been excited the strength of our horses, and the patience with ich the poor animals had hitherto endured their fferings, they were doubly so by what we witnessed om this time until we again rested. Sometimes the ater was up to their necks; and then, indeed, some of he packages, which hung by the sides of the horses which carried baggage in addition to their riders, were floating, which gave some relief to the beasts. At other times, the roots of spruce trees and the mud beneath the water entangled and held their legs until we alighted, immersed above our waists in the water and mud, to aid them in disengaging themselves, and to wait until they recovered from the temporary exhaustion which they suffered.

During all these twenty versts, we rested but for one hour upon an islet similar to that which we had found in the middle of the portion of the swamps over which we first crossed; and it was about nine in the evening when we once more obtained firm footing upon the solid ground.

To proceed any further after we should again feel the solid earth beneath our feet, we had not contemplated; and as there were now no longer any inhabitants to be found, but at two long intervals of space, to admit of our getting better lodged, we were prepared to cut some stakes to form a tent with a light covering which we had brought with us, wherever we might find a convenient spot for the purpose. But the moment the horses felt the firm earth under their feet, they voluntarily set off at full trot, with apparently as much vigour as if they had been that moment taken from their pasture and had endured nothing; and as we had but five versts more to arrive at the commencement of

yet another section of the swamp, we determined to i them continue their way, and to defer encamping un we attained the border of the next obstruction to o progress.

Throughout these five versts, however, as we pr ceeded, we found little to exult in; for even here the were broad pits full of stiff mud up to the horse knees, at every ten or twenty paces. Some of the required more exertion of strength to pass through than the worst swamp; but whenever the enduring animals, after every struggle, got again firm footing fo only a few roods at a time, they seemed as if they ha suffered nothing. Such, indeed, appeared to be their condition when we arrived at the edge of the swamp by which we had determined to encamp, that we now even hesitated between choosing to encamp or to proceed. We were upon the banks of a swamp, though only five versts in breadth, yet of greater difficulty in the passage, than any we had encountered and surmounted; but the same feeling possessed us now that we had experienced before encountering the last; and we did not like to lie down with these five versts before us. Yet, as some rest, at least, was necessary to recruit our strength, we sat down upon the dry ground and ate heartily of some ready-cooked beef, with which we had been furnished by the king of the swamps before our departure from the seat of his marshy empire. After this, while we sat round our *samovar*, sipping tea, our chief guide, like a general of division, rode forwards and backwards along the line of this swamp, to reconnoitre and find, if possible, some advantageous place at which we might recommence our march. And as the rest of the party, refreshed by the cheering beverage, became more full of hope, and perhaps too indifferent to the sufferings of the poor horses, it was agreed even to raise a common

against our leader, if he should decide upon defer-
g the attempt to overcome the immediate obstacles
fore us until the morning.

The view, too, of the swamp in our front, with such
the surrounding country as we could see, was novel;
hich is always more favourable to action than to
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treaded versts, which formed a portion of the landscape,
and the bed of which was sunken beneath the level of
the plain, were entirely covered with low and close-
sown spruces of a light-green tint, as equal in colour,
as far as the eye could reach upon our right and our
left, as a green-leafed wood in the spring.

When our prudent leader returned to us, he declared that he could discover no one track that seemed better than the rest, to begin our passage of this swamp. He would have suggested, he said, remaining where we were until the morning, on account of the sufferings already undergone by our poor animals, but that there was every appearance of another storm and fresh torrents of rain, which, if they occurred, might oblige us to continue encamped here for several days, without the shelter of a tree; whereas, not far from the opposite side of the swamp, there were groves of firs, under which we might obtain tolerable shelter. Thus, we determined upon the attempt without making more delay than was necessary to enable the horses to recover in some degree from the exhaustion which they suffered. It was but to renew the contest with the same enemy we had already often vanquished; and the assurance of the reward that awaited us upon the opposite side of the swamp, in dry ground and fir groves, filled us with the hopes that might possess soldiers that pass to the deadly breach, when all the

yet another section of the swamp, we determined to let them continue their way, and to defer encamping until we attained the border of the next obstruction to our progress.

Throughout these five versts, however, as we proceeded, we found little to exult in; for even here there were broad pits full of stiff mud up to the horses' knees, at every ten or twenty paces. Some of these required more exertion of strength to pass through than the worst swamp; but whenever the enduring animals, after every struggle, got again firm footing for only a few roods at a time, they seemed as if they had suffered nothing. Such, indeed, appeared to be their condition when we arrived at the edge of the swamp by which we had determined to encamp, that we now even hesitated between choosing to encamp or to proceed. We were upon the banks of a swamp, though only five versts in breadth, yet of greater difficulty in the passage, than any we had encountered and surmounted; but the same feeling possessed us now that we had experienced before encountering the last; and we did not like to lie down with these five versts before us. Yet, as some rest, at least, was necessary to recruit our strength, we sat down upon the dry ground and ate heartily of some ready-cooked beef, with which we had been furnished by the king of the swamps before our departure from the seat of his marshy empire. After this, while we sat round our *samovar*, sipping tea, our chief guide, like a general of division, rode forwards and backwards along the line of this swamp, to reconnoitre and find, if possible, some advantageous place at which we might recommence our march. And as the rest of the party, refreshed by the cheering beverage, became more full of hope, and perhaps too indifferent to the sufferings of the poor horses, it was agreed even to raise a common

ery against our leader, if he should decide upon deferring the attempt to overcome the immediate obstacles before us until the morning.

The view, too, of the swamp in our front, with such of the surrounding country as we could see, was novel; which is always more favourable to action than to repose. The drier portions of the country appeared covered with dark-coloured firs of the several species often mentioned as chiefly predominant, while the five dreaded versts, which formed a portion of the landscape, and the bed of which was sunken beneath the level of the plain, were entirely covered with low and close-sown spruces of a light-green tint, as equal in colour, as far as the eye could reach upon our right and our left, as a green-leafed wood in the spring.

When our prudent leader returned to us, he declared that he could discover no one track that seemed better than the rest, to begin our passage of this swamp. He would have suggested, he said, remaining where we were until the morning, on account of the sufferings already undergone by our poor animals, but that there was every appearance of another storm and fresh torrents of rain, which, if they occurred, might oblige us to continue encamped here for several days, without the shelter of a tree; whereas, not far from the opposite side of the swamp, there were groves of firs, under which we might obtain tolerable shelter. Thus, we determined upon the attempt without making more delay than was necessary to enable the horses to recover in some degree from the exhaustion which they suffered. It was but to renew the contest with the same enemy we had already often vanquished; and the assurance of the reward that awaited us upon the opposite side of the swamp, in dry ground and fir groves, filled us with the hopes that might possess soldiers that pass to the deadly breach, when all the

incentives to success in the sacking of a town as present to their imaginations.

When all was ready, our chief guide now led the way, and we descended into the swamp, marching in single file. We passed the first half verst without more than the usual difficulty; but after this our trials augmented apace. Where, indeed, the water was deepest, we suffered less, as before, for the same reasons, though it was sometimes up to the horses' backs, and we were of course ourselves half immersed. In other places, sometimes one and sometimes another of the patient animals was brought completely to a stand, till encouraged by the presence or relieved by the tugging of several others at some ropes, which we fastened round their necks for the purpose. In places where the water was more shallow than ordinary, they frequently laid themselves down; and as we could not but respect their attempt to rest themselves, which seemed like a plaint against us for our apparent cruelty, we alighted, and stood awhile in the mire. My own beast, in one instance, made an attempt to lie down, where the water was too deep to leave his organs of respiration free, and thus completely ducked me in the cold pool; and the others served their riders much in the same way. But if there were any blame, it was not to the poor brutes that it was justly due.

Our line of march had been soon broken after we entered this swamp; and we became dispersed, and could only see one another's heads occasionally, where the swamp was shallowest and the spruces lowest. Our chief guide, however, when we were in the very midst of the swamp, conceived our position to be so desperate, that he called to us to assemble as near as possible together, to hold a consultation concerning the difficulties with which we were contending; and we all contrived to gather within a talking distance of one

another. Our Yakoute leader now declared the state of the swamp to be so much worse than he had expected to find it, that he thought we ought together to consider whether it were better that we should persevere in our efforts to attain the opposite side of this gulf of mire, or endeavour to return. Though the Yakoute's words were not known to us, their full value was easily understood by the signs, action, and expression of countenance with which they were accompanied; and they fell upon our ears like fresh syllables of dolor in the hour of affliction.

"Wherefore return?" said one of the party in words accompanied by signs. "We know the fearful portion of the swamp we have passed over, and may hope to find the remainder improve as we proceed."

"Because," said the chief guide, in reply, and in tolerably terse and forcible language, as it seemed to reach our ears, accompanied by the most significant signs, "because we know what is past, but not what is to come." And when it was argued that it could not be worse, the guide made signs to us, signifying that it might be much worse, and that in case it should prove so at the time when it was found impossible to reach the opposite side, it might then be equally impossible to return again, even across the last verst through which we should have waded.

To contemplate perishing in a swamp of five versts in breadth, after the hundreds of versts of the same character of country which we had passed over, seemed only worthy for a tyro in adventure; and the idea of retreat after facing the enemy so long and so valiantly, was worse than the contemplation of the risk before us. Nevertheless, such reasoning as this might only become those who had to try and to risk their own sinews and spirit alone; whereas, it was by the strength of nerve,

and courage of our beasts, that we must finally sink or swim.

After some further discussion about our position, it was determined, in consequence of one among the party reminding the rest that the horses would return upon their steps with more courage, and proportionate increase of strength, than they would go forward, that we should advance a short distance further, if this were possible, when we might hold a second council, with all the new bearings and our further experience before us. Suffice it, we met no worse troubles than those above described, until we were within, as we believed, less than a verst of the opposite side of the swamp, when return was impossible. Here, however, all our difficulties were augmented, with the addition of the torrents of rain which had been foreseen. Nevertheless, hope was certainly before us, and despair behind, and at least there could now arise no doubt about which course we should follow. The worst feature now was, that the swamp appeared to have no solid bottom at any depth, so that the horses were not able to stand, even for two or three minutes together, upon the same spot, in doing which, when in the middle of the swamp, they had been sometimes able to rest themselves when most exhausted. But,

> "Evils that are about to leave,
> Before their departure, most of all show evil;"

and it seemed to us, as if the noble animals that carried us knew very well, that though what remained to them to suffer was severe, the distance left, and the further duration of their sufferings, were but short; for they now appeared to make more than their former efforts. We became now, however, completely dispersed; and none of us, after this, knew how the rest were proceeding. My poor horse at one time, when he seemed

out to sink down for good, and when I was preparing attempt the way without him, I found was only sting himself, by lying across a ridge of the roots of ees, which he had discovered beneath him, at a conenient depth to repose upon, with his mouth above vater. I was disposed to permit him to lie as long as e pleased, though I was myself immersed to the waist n water. But he had not remained in this position above a minute, before he was roused to new efforts by one of the Yakoutes shouting out to signify, without doubt, that he was on the point of reaching the dry ground, and by the vigorous neighing of the guide's horse, which instantly followed, and was answered by all the rest.

The power of the passions over the sinews seems not to be limited to human nature. Wherever there is hope, it will, in proportion to its force, stimulate the muscles and sinews of the creature that possesses it. The efforts of my poor beast, which seemed before to have exhausted nature's provision for the last necessity, were now redoubled. But in a few minutes after this he received his reward; and, as he pressed once more the firm sod, he fell to neighing as lustily, as if he had just landed after merely swimming a narrow but cold stream, and set off at full trot along the edge of the swamp, to meet the only one of the guides with his horse, that had yet landed, and who now at the distance of 100 or 200 yards from the spot at which we touched again the firm ground, was coming also at full speed to meet us. A minute or two after this, the merchant joined us, and we now wanted only the Yakoutes and their horses, which carried the bulkier articles of the baggage. They had been embarrassed by their loads; but the hardy men had alighted, and marched up to their waists in the water and mud, and sometimes nearly to their necks, for several versts. They had mounted

again, however, at the neighing of our animals, and now joined us within a quarter of an hour after we had landed, without having lost a single article that they had in charge.

The immense morasses which we had now happily passed, are little less than three hundred versts in breadth, and the passage of them, if not the most dangerous, was, at least, the most arduous portion of all the journeys that I had, up to this period of these travels encountered. I may say too, that our sufferings on this occasion afforded the first instance I ever met in travelling, that I have not found the difficulties of the way exaggerated by those from whom I have sought the information that is useful or indispensable before undertaking every journey. Nevertheless, the length of the details which have been given concerning the passage of some portions of these swamps, might seem out of proportion to the interest of the subject, were it not that these obstructions in the path of the traveller are themselves a remarkable natural feature of the country, and moreover, the occasion a good one, though not the sole instance, that the account of this journey will present, for illustrating the character of the Siberian horse, the good qualities of which have been before so much extolled in more general terms.

The firm ground upon which we here stood, is formed by the banks of the River Berli, which we now followed for several versts, crossing two or three small streams in our way, in search of a good dry and sheltered place to encamp, and where, at the same time, there might be grass for our horses in the morning. At length, after a march of seventeen hours, we pitched our tents in an open grove of spruces, springing from a grass bed by the side of the stream.

While my companion and myself were changing our clothes, the Yakoutes made a good fire near the entrance

f our tent, and prepared an excellent mess of *stchee*, of ne fresh beef which we had remaining; after which, ve sipped tea, with a satisfaction only to be appreciated n a similar position. If there were any thing, indeed, :o draw from the full measure of our content, it was the knowledge that our poor beasts, which had been the greatest of the sufferers during the last entire day, instead of being permitted to satisfy the cravings of nature which they sustained, were, according to custom, tied to the trees, and kept fasting. And it seemed not much calculated to relieve their sufferings, that there was here abundance of grass growing around them, and beneath their very feet.

Our manner of encamping was like that of the Tungouse, save that the covering of our tent was of cotton, instead of birch bark, with which the Tungouse cover their wigwams. Our beds were formed of fresh spruce boughs, and were excellent. The Yakoutes had no tent, and they did not require any. They lay themselves down by the fire, careful only, that flame enough was kept up during the night, to secure them against any insidious approach of the bear, upon whose proper territory we had now entered, that savage animal having, like all the tribes that we have not made our associates, a great dread of fire.

Before I lay down, after this arduous day's journey, I endeavoured to persuade our half-wild companions to consent to let our horses pick at least a morsel of grass; but they were too positive in resisting any such infringement upon the established custom of the country, to leave room to doubt that there were sufficient reasons for this apparently cruel usage of these faithful aids and companions of our journey. Thus, after their unparalleled labours, and now that we were at rest, and had satisfied the cravings of our nature, and even fared sumptuously, they were still doomed to five hours of

fasting, not a minute of which, according to the opinion of the Yakoutes, could be abated, without endangering the lives of the beasts, or at least risking a day's detention, on account of the sickness which it was declared would not fail to follow such mistaken humanity.

## CHAP. XX.

### JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TO OCHOTSK—*continued.*

Manner of the Yakoutes Tethering their Horses.—The Rhubarb Plant serves the Horses for Food.—Consumption of our Food.—Voracious Appetites of the Yakoutes.—Necessary Restraint.—Passage of the River Berli.—Woods.—Passage of a First Ridge of Hills.—Detachment of a Caravan.—Loss of Horses in the Swamps.—A Horse killed by the Bears.—Character of the Merchandise.—Busy Scene.—Continue our Journey.—Fear of the Horses of the Bears.—Unquiet Night.—Unsuccessful Hunt.—Pitiable Condition of the Horses.—Arrival at a Post.—Intelligent Yakoute *Smotritel.*—Streams.—Country of the Bears.—New Beasts.—Mistrust of their Capacity.—Sentimental Leave-taking of our long-tried Friends.—Humanity of the Yakoutes.—The Wild Man may instruct the most Civilised.

WITHIN the tent we slept well; and we did not awake until a late hour in the morning: nor did we care to rise until we had compensated our overwrought strength, after the fatigues to which we had been subjected during the long and arduous trials of the preceding day.

When we came out of our snug little domicile, we found the Yakoutes lying by a blazing fire, entirely enveloped in their deer-skins, and apparently sound asleep. They had been up, however, and had tethered their horses after the mode of the country; and the hungry animals were biting the grass with a keenness that indicated either that they had been but a short time at pasture, or were conscious that they had but a few short moments to lay in their spare store of food for another day's journey.

The manner in which the Yakoutes tether their

horses is peculiar, but has doubtless been found suited to the necessity of the case. A rope is fastened by a loop beneath the fetlock of one of the animal's hind feet, then passed round the upper part of his fore leg, and afterwards made fast round the neck. This effectually prevents them from straying far enough away to elude search when wanted, and yet leaves them at liberty, at the appearance of the bear, to gather close to the encampment of their rational companions, where the fires, which are rarely left to get low, even though the men should be all sleeping, are generally sufficient to prevent the enemy's too near approach.

One or two of our horses appeared to prefer the pasture where it seemed to us to be the poorest; but, upon approaching them, we found they were eating the leaves of the rhubarb plant, which, indeed, afterwards, during some of our stages, where it was more abundant, became an important article of their food.

As we did not know how our half-wild friends, still sleeping, had passed the night, nor how long the horses had been feeding, we thought it better to leave all parties undisturbed, and to begin ourselves the preparations for some necessary refreshment before our departure. After rummaging our sacks, however, we found that already all the fresh stock that we had so lately obtained was devoured. The quantity that we had left in the evening was so great, that had I not been before among the Bouriats, and seen something, and heard more, of their voracious appetites, and had I not been afterwards told that the Yakoutes were greater eaters than they, I could not have believed it possible that the edacious powers of any four men of any race could have been great enough to consume all that had been left after our last night's supper. It was, nevertheless, a good lesson to us; and, believing it to be equally prudent and justifiable to restrain such dan-

rerous appetites in so scarce a country, we determined at once upon putting our friends upon such allowance as our present stock and our expectations seemed to render necessary.

When the Yakoutes awoke, we had already finished the solids of our breakfast, if the dry stuff, which was once mutton, might be so termed, and we were over our refreshing *samovar*. As soon as our companions saw how we were occupied, and observed by the sun how far the day had advanced, they assured us that the horses had been feeding for three hours, and that it was now time to put an end to their feasting, which they declared that the poor animals had already indulged to excess. We let them, of course, have their way; and, after they had secured the horses, we handed them each a small portion of biscuit to eat hastily before our departure, taking care, at the same time, to let them know that we were quite aware of the good supper they had made, and of the little need they had of a similar breakfast.

It was about nine o'clock when we recommenced our march. An hour brought us to the point where we were to pass over the River Berli, by which we had encamped. We found here a little Yakoute hut, inhabited by a family who kept a small canoe, in which we crossed the stream, while our men passed the horses over by driving them into the water, in the same manner as on a former occasion.

After passing the Berli, we found the country more thickly wooded, with the accustomed varieties of the fir tribes, than any we had passed through since the commencement of our journey. Our horses did not appear to want a particle of the spirits and strength with which they had set out upon the previous day; and our march, though occasionally impeded by deep beds of mud, which we could not escape, was almost

as rapid as that of the first days after our leaving Yakoutsk.

Towards evening we mounted the gradual ascent of the first range of hills which we met with, and which, in effect, form the first step of the broad range of high lands which lie between the districts of the swamps and the sea, and are comprised under the appellation of the Iablonoi or Stanovoi Mountains. The woods here seemed to us, after the country we had passed through, both close and luxuriant; and we observed some larch mixed with the varieties of the coarser firs.

Towards evening, as we descended the same hills, we overtook the chief detachment of our merchants' long-looked-for caravan, which we found, from the captain of the party, had lost fourteen more horses in the passage of the swamps upon this side of the post, at which he had replaced his previous losses. One had also been killed, and another lacerated by a bear. The ferocious beast that had killed his prey, had taken the horse at tether, and had not been seen by the men. He had drawn out and carried away the entrails of the animal, to feast upon the delicacy at a distance to which none of the party could follow him, without leaving the caravan for too long a time. This was the first notice we had of the necessity we were now under of taking all sorts of precautions against the attacks of these voracious beasts as we proceeded.

At the time of our coming up with the party, they were upon the point of encamping for the night. The caravan still consisted of nearly a hundred horses, every one charged with four pouds in weight, packed in a manner similar to those that have been before mentioned, in which we carried our provisions and baggage. The principal part of the merchandise which the caravan was transporting consisted of articles for the supply of the government stores at the port of

Ochotsk, which had been contracted for by the commercial house to which my companion belonged. The rest comprised several articles of European manufacture, the principal of which was cloth, and some tea and a large proportion of tobacco. These articles were chiefly to exchange with the aborigines of the country, for furs for the Siberian and Russian markets.

Tea and tobacco are prized beyond all other things by the Siberians of the Russian race, wherever they are found. Tobacco, however, is equally valued, and tea not much less so, by the aborigines, both nomadic and settled, in this part of the country, and even within the territories of an independent tribe, whom we shall notice in a future page.

The caravan, as we sat on our own beasts, presented to us a novel and agreeable spectacle. The horses stood tied in groups round the trees, and about thirty Yakoutes were busily occupied in cutting wood, lighting fires, and preparing their supper, in which they displayed all the quickness and activity which belong to the Russians, with the good humour of a party of *isvoshtchiks* or *yemstchiks* upon a national *fête* day.

We remained among them only long enough for the merchant to transact his affairs with the captain of the detachment, which was easily done, as we sat over our ever-welcome *samovar*. We then set off again, in the hope of overtaking the party still in advance, which had left Yakoutsk a week earlier, but which was now probably not more than two of our longest days' journeys ahead of us.

About an hour before midnight, we stopped and encamped in a grove of spruces, by the side of a brook, which was always desirable, on account of the advantage it afforded of obtaining good water, and, not less so, on account of the greater quantity of fresh pasture which we found for our beasts.

Our horses during the whole of this day had shown signs of terror of their savage enemy the bear; and while the Yakoutes were pitching our tents, and preparing for supper, the merchant and myself, with our arms in hand, scoured the wood immediately around us, to see that no enemy was in waiting to catch us sleeping. All was, however, quiet, and seemed secure; and we supped, and lay down as usual, leaving the Yakoutes by the fire, to make their own arrangements for the watch, but with strict injunctions that they should call us, without the least delay, in case of there being the smallest cause of alarm.

We slept as soundly, for the first two hours of this night, as at ordinary times during the journey. About an hour after midnight, however, one of the Yakoutes came into our tent, to tell us that he was sure there was a bear near at hand, as the horses, just as they were accustomed to do when their shaggy enemy appeared, had left the better pasture upon which they had been placed, and would not trust themselves any longer a dozen yards from their masters and the fire.

At this news we gladly jumped up, in the hope of a contest with the common enemy; certainly not quite so fair on our side as the war waged against them by the natives; but the want of whose dexterity in the use of simpler weapons might well excuse us for employing the same means men employ to destroy one another.

We now entered the wood on one side, with our fowling-pieces in hand and our pistols at the girdle, while our friends took the opposite side with their daggers only, promising to give us timely notice in case they discovered the enemy, that we might at least share the sport. But after a full hour's hunt through the wood around, all ended in disappointment. We found, indeed, no trace of wild beast of any kind; so we re-entered our tent, and lay down again to rest. We

had, however, a very unquiet night; for such was still the terror of the horses, that they got within the strings of our tent, and after disturbing us for some time, at length knocked the tent down. We had no cause, however, to regret this; for when we had disengaged ourselves from the entanglement in which we were involved by the fall of the tent, we were surprised to find all the Yakoutes soundly sleeping. Two of them were snugly rolled up in their skins, and lying by the fire; while a third, that should have been watching, was sitting with his back against some bags he had piled up, as unconscious as the others, and the fire was very low. We disturbed only the sleeping sentinel, whom we set to work to replenish the expiring fire, while we lay down now after the manner of the rest. Of repose, however, we had even still very little; for our timid beasts, whether they had seen one of their dreaded enemies, or had only had olfactory evidence of one of them being at hand, continued to crowd about us and disturb us; and which, indeed, it was not our interest, and scarcely our inclination, to prevent, although we lost by it the most precious part of the time we had allotted for repose.

But, besides the inconvenience attending this gratifying confidence in us on the part of our horses, when the hour came for renewing our journey, the condition of the poor beasts, which had scarcely had any more food since we halted than a few leaves of the rhubarb plant, was worse than ours. The merchant and myself would even now, notwithstanding our desire to push on, have led them to the pasture to feed for an hour, rather than have mounted them, hungry as they were, had not our Yakoutes declared that they were better without any food whatever for four and twenty hours and more, than with the quantity with which they would now stuff themselves if they were permitted to feed;

and, moreover, that there was a post at the distance of two or three hours from where we had been resting, at which we should change. So, after our accustomed frugal morning meal, during which we gave the guides just enough to keep them alive, we recommenced our journey.

After about two hours' march this morning, we arrived at the thirteenth post, called Tshernoleska, ninety versts distant from that at which we had obtained the noble animals which we were now to leave behind us. The *smotritel* whom we found here was a Yakoute, and he had only a very wretched hut placed in the midst of an indifferent piece of pasture ground. But we observed plenty of horses feeding around, which at least seemed to guarantee our speedy departure; so that the merchant and myself, while the Yakoutes occupied themselves with discharging our animals, and preparing to continue the journey, endeavoured to obtain from the owner of our new beasts, who was able to converse with my companion, as much information as we could concerning the condition of the country before us.

The sum of the information we received from this Yakoute was, that we should find another post about thirty-five versts further, but which the difficulties that the country presented for travelling rendered it impossible we could reach that day. Our track he described as mountainous and full of rapid streams. The mountains, however, he informed us, were not of difficult ascent; but that the amount of obstruction we should receive from the streams, would entirely depend upon the quantity of rain that had lately fallen in the higher lands which we were about to pass, and upon the effects of the sun in melting the snow, and upon the ice of the glaciers, which all the year cover the extensive table of the irregular broad range of mountains, of

which we might consider we had already begun the ascent.

Our troubles during our passage of some of the streams through which we had already waded, had been such, that we had quite forgotten the bear, till this Yakoute placed him also among the augmented inconveniences which we must still expect to encounter on the way, not on account of any personal danger to ourselves (of which there was little cause of alarm), but on account of the difficulty that is found of feeding the horses while the party is at rest wherever this animal abounds, and of which we had already had, indeed, some experience.

His own difficulty, the Yakoute also informed us, in preserving his horses from the bears upon the first melting of the snow in the spring, while their food was yet scarce, was very great. But he usually killed four or five of them between that time and the growing of the berries upon which they chiefly fed. He used a civilised weapon—certainly a gun, though to what tribe it belonged, and what name to give it when he brought it to show us, we might be pardoned for not knowing; but by the time he had committed that amount of destruction, the bears usually forsook his vicinity.

He had lost, he informed us, only one or two very young horses for some years. As his beasts were never tethered, they saved themselves by gathering about his house when alarmed; for as there was no darkness after the melting of the snow, until the time when the food of the bears was abundant, their enemy had not the advantage of the night when most in need of extraneous provision; and by day-light the fiercest among them rarely came near his dwelling.

While we were conversing with this Yakoute, some good women of his household prepared our *samovar*,

and a large quantity of milk, which was all the refreshment they had to give us; and by the time we had well satisfied ourselves with tea and this luxury, the fresh horses were ready to be loaded for our use.

Our first acquaintance with our next fellow-travellers of burden did not give us any very high expectations. There was not much beauty, indeed, to admire in those we were now to abandon; but these were their inferiors in size, and apparently in every thing in which strength is supposed to lie. It was evident that they had not the daily food of the horses of the sovereign of the swamps, within whose domain both man and beast seemed to fare so sumptuously. But their owner, when we dispraised them, smiled; not, indeed, like a horse dealer cunningly bent upon practising some deception, but in the confidence of honesty, with the assurance of how soon we should be undeceived; and we had seen too many wonders in this way already, to have any want of confidence in the virtues of any of the *chevaline* race of the country.

After this inspection of our fresh animals, we passed on to take a last leave of those we were to abandon. They were tied to the trunk of a tree, and were tranquilly standing with their heads hanging beneath their shoulders at perfect rest, and seemed half asleep and half awake. We talked to them, and caressed them, and bade them warm adieus. It was a satisfaction to us, since we could not do more, to lift up their long white manes, which hung down to their knees upon both sides of their necks, and to pat them again and again. The scene of human and brute intercourse did not, however, end here. While we were thus occupied, our Yakoute friends came to take the same leave of their irrational companions: and their leave-taking, it is necessary to confess, was far more worthy of the occasion than ours. Instead of vain apostrophes and

regrets such as we had used, these good men threw their arms round the necks—every one of the animal that he had ridden—and hugged and caressed them as fondly and tenderly, as if the dumb beasts had been of the same nature and race as themselves. Nor, indeed, was the gratifying scene yet wholly ended. One of our Yakoutes came up to me when he saw that we were imitating their example, and touched me on the shoulder; and when I turned, he said something, which, as he did not accompany his words with action, I did not understand. Upon this, however, this native of the forest stretched up his right arm, and pointing with his forefinger towards the sky, said *Tagarra*, which I knew very well from our vocabulary was the term in his language for God. Then, with a countenance as expressive of high moral feeling as I ever saw portrayed upon the features of the most benevolent of men, he attempted again to explain himself by words. But though their general tenour might be divined, I could not distinctly understand him. Then seeing this, he now explained himself in a manner that the dullest of mortal men could not have failed to comprehend. He pointed again to the sky, and uttered the same phrase as before, and then placed his hand upon my shoulder, and then upon the horse, and then upon his own shoulder, and then again pointed to the sky. It was evident that he said, "We are all three children of the same Parent, and ought to be kind and affectionate to one another."

How many sages—if an observation may be here permitted concerning the moral we seemed to learn from our semi-barbarous companions — have been indebted to the boor in human learning, for knowledge which is not to be acquired through the ordinary intercourse between equals. Wherefore, then, should not civilised men, which we at least deemed ourselves to be, learn

from such of our species as have had nature alone for their guide, and who, though strangers to much of the knowledge we possess, are not without the innate impression, as it is plain, that all creatures, whether rational or irrational, are children of the same Parent. Here we at least learned that, whatever the deficiencies of the companions of our journey in what we deem the essentials of civilisation, they were not without the full impulse of the heart, when any occasion gave it the opportunity of utterance.

## CHAP. XXI.

### JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TO OCHOTSK—*continued.*

Streams of Torrents.—Change in the Character and Interest of the Journey.—Quality of our Horses.—Fresh Instances of the Sagacity of our Horses.—Wading Rivers.—Nature of the Danger.—Higher Lands.—Character of the Forests.—Fine Weather.—Continual Ascent.—Smaller Streams.—Precipitous Way.—Cross the First Ridge of Hills.—Views.—Shallow Valleys.—Narrow Plains.—Glaciers.—Their curious Character.—Mosquitoes.—Tea on the Ice.—Rapid March.—Scarcity of Provisions.—Advantages of not being a great Eater.—Yakoute Porridge of Bark and Spruce Tops.—Unexpected Discovery concerning our Companions.—Mists.—Superstitions of the Yakoutes.—Character of their Conversion to Christianity.—Their moral Condition.—Impressions of the Presence of invisible Spirits.

After leaving the post last mentioned, we encountered stream after stream with rapid torrents during the rest of the day. Sometimes for many versts, our proper road lay upon the beds of these streams; and where this was not the case, the banks upon the right and the left alternately formed steep cliffs without a beach, which kept us continually crossing and recrossing the torrents that swept down between them.

The immediate character and interest of the journey were now quite changed; and the torrents through which we had to wade, and the precipitous banks we had often to climb and descend without a path before us, offered more real danger, though they were less painful to encounter, both to ourselves and to our horses, than any we had experienced during the passage of the swamps.

In some of the more rapid streams, the water was up

to our horses' necks and filled with large and loose stones of all forms, which it seemed as if it were impossible the beasts under us could pass over without falling. The sagacity, indeed, of the Siberian horse, now displayed in these new difficulties, was not less than those good qualities of his race for which we were indebted to him for our safe passage across the swamps. The noble animals maintained the position while wading the streams, which is doubtless that alone which could enable creatures of their form to cross a rapid current. We observed, that they not only leaned towards the side from which the current flowed, and bent their knees on the same side, but that at the same time they opened and spread out their legs, to obtain the firmest possible hold of the ground.

But besides these rapid torrents, we passed several fords of deeper streams, where the inconveniences were greater, though the danger was less. Several times the water reached half way up our horses' bodies, and in one instance, we found our beasts swimming, whilst we ourselves were immersed to the waist. But in these streams the current was not so strong as in those that were shallower, and there was little risk, indeed, of more than a ducking, such as we were well accustomed to, and thought not worth regarding, after our sufferings in the swamps. The danger to the rider, when the water is shallower and the current strongest, arises from the bed of the river being then most encumbered with the large and loose stones, by which his horse will sometimes be thrown down. In this event, he must disengage himself both from the animal beneath him and from every thing with which he is encumbered, as soon as he can; and, as it would be useless to attempt to walk with legs offering so much more resistance to the torrent than those of the horse, in proportion to the weight of his body, it is necessary, even though the water

hould not be above three feet deep, to strike out immediately, to gain the nearest shore; for he may be ertain that wherever the fords are found, there is deep vater immediately below them. For all this, however, ve were well prepared.

At length, after a day during which our wadings of hese streams formed the only incident worthy of renembrance, we encamped in a place similar to that where we had passed the last night, having made fifty versts during the day, and, as we believed, about thirtyive since we passed the post at which we had last changed.

On the morning after our first experience of the nature of travelling in the higher lands in this part of the country, we were upon our way again at an early hour. As we had been marching against the course of the rivers all the previous day, the streams that we now crossed were generally narrower, and offered less obstruction in the passage of them than we had experienced when we were further from their sources; so that we proceeded more rapidly, while we had at the same time more leisure to observe the character of the country around us.

Until now, the spruce in its ordinary varieties had been sometimes the only kind of tree or shrub that was to be seen; and at other times the larch, with more kindly growth, flourished side by side with the several species of the hardier fir. Here and there, indeed, we had observed the pine growing, but only to the size, and in the form, of a mere shrub. But now we had the two first mentioned of these species among the innumerable varieties of the fir, of more luxuriant growth and in nearly equal quantities, and, at the same time, pines much larger in size than those we had seen before, and so rare and curious in form as to be worthy of particular remark. Not in a few instances merely,

but during nearly the whole of this day's journey, we observed these trees growing as nearly as possible in the form of a bell turned upside down, and set upon its handle, which was represented by the trunk of the tree. The particular species appeared to be that of the common white pine, which, although I had seen it growing both where scarce and where abundant, of all sizes, from the shrub up to the sovereign of the most magnificent forests, I never before observed taking this form. Here, however, where it seemed to have robbed all the other species that appeared in its immediate vicinity of their fair share of the earth's foison and abundance—for none of any other kind which were near it exceeded in growth the smaller shrubs—its height did not exceed that of the spruce in favourable situations, or perhaps twenty feet, while the bowl of the bell that was formed must have been in many instances eighty or ninety, and in some cases above a hundred feet in circumference.

The weather had been fine since we reached the dry lands, and we enjoyed the first part of this day, as freer from the natural obstructions to travelling which the country offers, than any we had passed since the first days of our journey. We were continually ascending the hills in front of us; and, before mid-day, the streams had become mere brooks, though our way was now more precipitous, and more fatiguing for our horses.

Early in the afternoon we crossed the summit of the first ridge of hills of any considerable height forming the grand mountain range. Owing to the rugged character of the ground, and the winding of the ways through which we had passed, we had obtained but one view of the country around, and that had been at no great elevation. But here we were more fortunate; and we halted for a short time to refresh our wearied sense,

o long fixed upon the same scenes immediately around us. We had now, indeed, an extensive view of the country through which we had passed, which presented to us an undulated and vast tract of land covered with its sombre groves, that seemed to want nothing but the variations in the colour of the vegetation of more temperate climes to exhibit all the freshness and variety of the most luxuriant forests.

After this we passed over narrow plains or shallow valleys, in which the horses were sometimes up to their knees in snow, and at other times marching upon masses of ice, honeycombed upon the surface by the rays of the sun, though quite solid beneath. These are the glacial districts of these mountains, whence the streams of the lower country are supplied with water, when the sun has its full force in the height of summer. This source, however, of these streams is cut off with the earlier frosts, which usually occur towards the end of August; after which the lesser rivers are dried up. In some places we found rents in the ice like fissures in solid rocks; and through these the water was running over the ground in winding courses just in the manner that the brooks generally flow; and to pass them was difficult, on account of the thickness of the ice, which was from ten to fifteen feet. But in some places these unsubstantial banks of the streams were so worn beneath by the passage of the water, that, upon the horses approaching the edge of them, large sheets upon which we were marching broke off, and let us easily down; while the noise they occasioned in falling, made the hills echo with the loud sound from one extremity of the vale to the other. But what was most remarkable to observe upon these glacial fields, was the heat of the sun's rays reflected from the ice, which was greater than any thing of the kind I remembered experiencing, except the reflection from the sand in the hottest climates.

Here, too, and far from the dry ground or trees, th quantity of the mosquitoes which swarmed until five i the afternoon exceeded any thing we had met with i the swamps. Altogether, the scenes and all we ex perienced during this day were novel in our travels; and the noise at all times of the ice melting sensibly around us—the occasional deep sounds caused by the falling of masses of the frozen element by the side of the streams—the crackling of the horses' feet as they crushed the honeycombed ice beneath them—the murmur of the running waters—the clouds of mosquitoes, and the excessive heat,—left an impression as indelible as that of the more disagreeable portions of the journey already described.

While we were in the region of these glaciers, we took our accustomed hour's rest during the day. After making a little fire in the stove of the *samovar*, for which the Yakoutes had provided fuel, we boiled water without the least difficulty; and after placing some packages on the ice, sat down upon these, and partook of tea and biscuits.

Our march to-day was more rapid than usual; and, at the sixteenth hour from the time we left the last place of encampment, we halted in a deep and wooded valley, surrounded with high mountain peaks, which from their conical forms, were evidently of volcanic formation; and we were now, by the estimation of our guides, about sixty versts from the spot upon which we had last slept.

I believe I may here notice the want to which we were now reduced, though so soon after the last replenishment of our stock of provisions, as a little incident of the journey, and place the inconveniences which we thereby suffered to the right account, without any danger of setting down aught in malice.

When we came to prepare our supper this evening, yself at least was much surprised to find all the iscuits gone, which was certainly, as they had been itherto the staple of our spare larder, a matter of not little importance upon such a journey. However, I as tolerably confident, that among certain sacks that ere yet untouched, there was something in reserve hat would turn out nearly as good; some treat perhaps, uch as rye or barley flour, which our good caterer might ntend to surprise the whole party with, whenever the eed was most manifest. There was, indeed, nothing of ur former articles of food left, save about half a meal f the dry chips of mutton for two of us; and I was ather curious than anxious to see what would now turn up, quite determined to be satisfied with whatever it might happen to be. And I was the less inquisitive upon the subject, lest I should chance to deprive my companion of the gratification, of which I thought he might be anticipating the enjoyment, when he should produce his reserve. Not being myself at any time a great eater — and I may say, that at this time I had never met with any man of any race that could maintain his strength and spirits upon so little food, or so long upon nothing, as I have been able to do — I have generally been careless about the travelling larder, and more especially when not alone; for I would rather travel upon biscuit and water, and have no plague about it, than upon roast beef, and have the responsibility of satisfying others. For once, however, I now met my equal, if not in the accomplishment of which I have just boasted, certainly in negligence in making provision for eventual necessity; and I confess I was as much disappointed as astonished, when I heard upon the first hint that was given concerning the contents of the well-cared-for sacks, that they contained only the merchant's samples of fine goods, save indeed one alone,

which did not exceed the dimensions of a lady's reticu which was filled with parched peas. But our cate was a young traveller, and probably myself of the tw was the most to blame for the situation in which w now found ourselves.

Already the Yakoutes had had nothing from us b occasionally a handful of biscuit dust between the since we left the last post. Some milk which they pr cured there, and which they had put into a leather bag, turned to a kind of cheese before we stopped again and had been eaten by them before they lay down upon the first night.

Nevertheless, such is the adaptation of the differen tribes and classes of our varied species to the particula circumstances of their condition, and such the variety i the manner of life of men of distinct races, inhabiting different parts of the earth, that while we pitied the Ya koutes, whom we had reduced, as we supposed, by sa necessity to an allowance from our spare larder such as the same number of mice would have starved upon, these semi-wild men were actually living in luxury, compared with the manner in which we ourselves fared, and were feeding, which was much more, upon food that could not, like ours, fail.

We had, indeed, observed our friends boiling their pot; but we had been so busy hunting the brooks for ducks, or the bushes for bears, or the woods for birds of any kind that we might chance to find, that we little regarded what they were about, or thought they were only making the most of what we had given them. But upon now perceiving, as they sat round a cauldron, dipping up its contents with wooden spoons, and cool ing broth with their breath, that they were at the same time crushing some solid article of food between the teeth, we examined their mess, and found it to consist of the bark of the spruce chopped in small pieces, and

boiled with the glutinous tops of the young sprouts of the same tree.

I had certainly before heard that these men could live upon such food; but I thought it a fable at the time, and had before this, long forgotten that I had heard it. When I now, however, actually saw them eat of this mess, I called to mind that I had read also in one of the works of our great natural philosopher Herschel, that sawdust itself was susceptible of conversion into a substance bearing no remote analogy to bread, and which, moreover, was both wholesome and digestible, as well as highly nutritious; and without having read which, I should scarcely have ventured to mention what we here witnessed, and perhaps at this time have thought, notwithstanding what I had heard, that I had been dreaming, when the note wherein this circumstance is registered was written.* Thus we now sat down over our mess of peas and last morsel of chip mutton, to eat it entirely ourselves with a very clear conscience, and in trusting that our guns might still aid us in time of greater need, in providing a better meal than that upon which the Yakoutes were feasting with apparently as much satisfaction as if they were over a mess of beef *stchee*.

We made to-night a little discovery, belonging rather to the moral than the physical incidents of the journey. Soon after our tent had been pitched, a thick mist entirely enveloped the grove around; and as the air was damp and disagreeable, while the Yakoutes reposed, or told tales to one another over the fire, we took our *samovar* within the tent, and afterwards sat down over the chiboock, indisposed for conversation, and dozing like Arabs. Indeed, the weather and the hour were such

* Herschel's "Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy."

as tended more to induce thought and reflection than action; and even the time, in relation to our past and future travels, was that which naturally disposes the mind as well as the body to relaxation and rest. The iron character of the journey seemed broken, in spite of our material wants. We were encamped in a sequestered vale near the summit of the mountains, with the descent from which we should encounter the streams that fall into the Ochotsk Sea, on which myself, at least, trusted that I should soon embark for other and sunnier climes.

After we had been seated for some time, indulging separate thoughts, our attention was called to the unusual silence beyond the folds of the tent, and we came out together to discover the cause of this. We found now a thicker mist prevailing than that from which we had fled, concealing every thing beyond the distance of a dozen yards around us. We approached the fire to see whether the Yakoutes were sleeping earlier than usual. But here we found only some red-hot logs mouldering to ashes, or changing to a more volatile element; and not one of the Yakoutes, either awake or asleep, was any where to be seen.

The absence of our guides surprised us; and after waiting some time, and seeing no one, we called out several times at the top of our voices, to give them notice wheresoever they might be, that we required their presence. But no one appeared, and no voice was heard in answer to this call, and no signal of any kind was returned. The mist was too dense to give us hopes of a search for our friends being of any avail; so we sat ourselves down quietly upon some logs by the fire, to await patiently the solution of the mystery.

The mist continued to veil every thing around us, save the faint outlines of the spruces, which were magnified to great trees by the vapoury atmosphere,

hrough which they were seen; and there was not the mallest motion in the air to disturb the dead silence vhich reigned.

A full hour passed, and we heard and saw nothing :hat led to any conjecture concerning the mysterious absence of the Yakoutes. They could not have forsaken us, or we should have wanted our horses also, which were all tranquilly dozing by our side. They could not have gone to gather wood, for logs were lying in abundance within a yard of the fire. Nor could they have gone in search of water, for a gentle brook "made sweet music with the enamelled stones" at our very feet. We thought of the bears. But no beasts could have made a meal upon four stout Yakoutes, without a ceremony over their feast that would have alarmed and brought forth fresh foes, whose eyes and ears had not even been closed, to dispute their right to mangle and devour human flesh. Were our hitherto faithful friends about to put on a new character, and attack us? To suspect their fidelity in any particular was difficult. But so far from believing them capable of making war upon us, either open or covert, we knew that subjection to a degree of respect towards civilised men their conquerors, even beyond any thing perhaps ever before seen among men in a similar condition, was a remarkable feature in the character of the race to which they belonged; and we had no ground for thinking they might be an exception to the general character of their people. Yet where were they? We called again and again at intervals, but received no answer. At length, after repeated calls with no better success, we fired a gun, which echoed through the mist from peak to peak, among the volcanic hills around us, like the distant roar of many cannons. Yet no voice replied, and no one appeared.

While, however, we were still engaged in conjec-

tures concerning the absence of our men, we chance to discover near the spot upon which the horses stood some loose white horse-hair lying strewed about upon the ground; and upon examining the horses, we found it quite certain that some hair had been cut from the tails and manes of more than one of them. At first this seemed, indeed, but to thicken the mystery; but when we now recalled to our recollection having several times during the journey seen some locks of horse-hair attached to the pendant boughs of the taller trees, and that, when we had inquired of the guide the cause of this, we appeared to receive only evasive answers, a stream of new light floated across our murky imaginations, and we remembered having been told at Yakoutsk, that although these aborigines of the land were Christians by law, and even by outward assent while dwelling among men "that with holy bell are knoll'd to church," yet that the ukase before mentioned, which had effected this important step in their moral progress, had not had power to abolish wholly their ancient religious rites, which were still practised by them in secret upon every favourable occasion. And as the very place, the mist, and the hour, seemed all favourable to this purpose, we could no longer doubt the cause of the absence of the Yakoutes.

After waiting very patiently for some time longer, we at length heard the cracking of dried sticks and other sounds of footsteps; and presently our friends appeared slowly advancing towards us, magnified to the size of giants by the dense mist through which they were seen. They evidently approached full of doubts of their absence being approved of, and probably suspicious of our divining the purpose for which they had hidden themselves from observation. There appeared, in fact, a gloom and sadness upon their countenances when they were near us, that would itself have confirmed, if it had been ne-

essary, all that we had conjectured. However, we felt bound to respect their religious rites, whatever they might be, and we made no remarks in allusion to their retirement and their neglect to appear at our summons, lest the imperfection of the means of intercourse we possessed might cause what we said to be misunderstood. For my own part I have always thought it a favourable sign in any unenlightened portion of my fellow-men, when I have observed indications of their consciousness of dependence upon some Superior Being; and I have, among the wildest races, always looked upon this in proportion to the sincerity which appears, and the moral which is attached to particular superstitions, as indicative of the sooner or later conversion of the people to the religion of civilised man. In general, indeed, the more ridiculous the faith of tribes among whom the more civilised nations have mixed, the more certain and speedy has been its destruction. And is it not, in the meantime, agreeable to reason to suppose, that even the worship of an idol, at least if it be not such as is excited by terror alone, but rather springing from a sense of gratitude, is more acceptable to the Creator than the orisons of the man of refinement whose actions do not correspond to the words which his lips utter, or who is moved by the terror attendant upon the uncertainty of the future rather than by thankfulness for the past, and for his hopes of a state to come?

Thus we went to bed, and took no account of the doings of our friends, nor presumed to judge whether they were evil or good; and it is scarcely necessary to add, that the first man of the Sclavonian race that we met, that was well acquainted with the character and condition of the Yakoutes, informed us, that all our suppositions concerning the cause of the absence of the men were without doubt quite correct. And the same

Russian, who was acquainted with all the superstiti extant among these people, informed us, that the ri of their ancient worship consist, for the most part, sacrifices to invisible spirits, which they suppose dw in the woods, and more especially in those that bou these and other mountains; and that portions of th horses' tails that we had frequently seen attached to th branches of trees, were there placed to notify to the imaginary beings when they might chance to pass by that such rite had been performed, and that thereabou they would find the sacrifice offered, which it wa thought in this case was probably something these me had saved from their last meal of good food.

Perhaps of all the impressions upon the minds of men that are not the offspring of a higher faculty tha the imagination, nothing is more natural than tha which peoples even this world with beings that are of a nature different from our own, and imperceptible to our senses; and accordingly, such appears to have been the belief even of some of the great departed among ourselves.

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
> Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep,"

were not words put into the mouth of the first man by the author of our great epic poem as opinions springing from superstition. Nor can Addison, when he asserts, in the 12th and other numbers of the Spectator, his belief in this truth, be, any more than Milton, said to be conveying the opinions of others, or to be treating of mere superstitions.

## CHAP. XXII.

### JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TO OCHOTSK—*continued.*

Recommence the Journey.—Fine Weather.—Grand Scenery.—Vegetation.—Elevated rocky Country.—Mists.—Streams.—Hunger of the Party.—Search for Bears.—Yakoute Triumph.—Precipitous Way.—Gloomy Prospect in respect to Food.—Abundance of Larch—Arrive at a Post.—Joy of our Horses.—Feast.—Cranberries.—Nothing to be got to carry away.—Renew our Journey.—Pass the River Allack.—A Swamp.—Recross the Allack.—Cross several Valleys.—A Glacier.—Descending towards the Lower Country.—Change in the Vegetation.—Valleys.—Streams.—Improvement in the Soil and the Vegetation.—Our Condition for Want of Food.—Consultation about killing a Horse for Food.—Opinion of the Yakoutes.—Duck and Bear Hunt.—Advantages of Hunger to Sportsmen.—Causes which attach the Indian to his Mode of Life.—Disappointment.—Success of the Chase.—Kill two Ducks.

After about six hours' repose, including the whole time of our stay at this encampment, we rose and took some tea, and ate only a few cold peas that were left of our supper of the last evening, and commenced the day's journey at a very little later hour than on ordinary occasions. The horses, also, had fared very badly during our stay here. They had found a few rhubarb plants, which they devoured very eagerly; but they had chiefly eaten the buds and tender twigs of the young spruce trees.

The morning was fine; and, as we proceeded, the scenery around us presented both grand and agreeable objects for contemplation. The vegetation was of the usual varieties of the fir tribes, including the cedar; and all the trees were in greater abundance, and of

firmer growth, and larger dimensions, than the avera of those of the same species that we had seen in t plains. But whenever we found ourselves upon a elevation, by the rugged character of the ground, t hills and the magnificent volcanic peaks on all sid seemed to enclose us within a bowl which had no pa sage either to approach or to leave it, without climbi some one of the rugged mountains around.

After about two hours' march, we reached yet a higher elevation than that of the spot upon which w had passed the night. There was, nevertheless, here a distant view, on account of the narrower basin in which we seemed now enclosed; and there was but litt vegetation around us, by reason of the rocky characte of the ground.

After another hour, we commenced, almost imperceptibly, our descent of the principal range of these mountains. A thick mist received us, as we appeared to enter upon a new territory, but this soon turned to a warm, drizzling rain. In another hour the descent began to be precipitous and the way difficult. We now crossed several narrow and rapid streams, which were the sources of the tributary River Aldan, which falls into the Léna. After this, the descent became gradual; and at mid-day, we halted and took our *samovar* in another basin of the mountains, not dissimilar from that in which we had last slept.

The merchant and myself began now, it must be confessed, to be very hungry; and we no sooner alighted, than we took our guns in hand, and set off to perambulate the groves around, in the good hope of finding some beast or bird to shoot and make a meal upon; but finding none, we were forced to be contented with tea and sugar. The Yakoutes were evidently amused at our apparent impatience, as they sat very contentedly over their bark porridge. But they gave

as this consolation, that we should not want food in good and wholesome flesh very long, if we liked that of the bear, as we were approaching some of the favourite haunts of that beast in this district of the country.

We remained here but a short time. Upon renewing our march, we found the country rugged and undulating, and we crossed several rapid but narrow streams.

We did not again halt until near midnight; but the road the whole day had been so rugged and precipitous, and had so much abounded in torrents of difficult passage, that we did not suppose we could have made above thirty versts during sixteen hours of actual march. The place selected for repose was like that where we had passed the last night. But there was now a gloomier prospect before us than we had hitherto had to contemplate, on the score of food. Neither beast nor bird was to be found; and as far as the guides could judge, we were yet above twenty-five versts from the next post. We had, indeed, nothing whatever left, save one or two lumps of sugar. Had a bear, or some bird of any kind appeared, however gross for food, it would have excited in us the spirit of chase of the eagle in pursuit of his prey. The prospect for our horses, too, was not much better; for there was here neither the rhubarb plant nor the spruce tree. The few shrubs that were to be found were larches, the tender parts of which are inferior for animal diet to those of the spruce. But there was a little moss, which was probably all they would have to nourish them until the next evening. We, however, drank our tea, and retired in the full hope of being roused to hear of the approach of a bear some time during the night, or at least of hearing the chirrup of some one of the winged tribes in the morning.

The night, however, brought us no such welcome

visitor as we hoped to make a feast upon, and the morning opened without any sound of birds, either song or of prey. When we arose, the atmosphere was full of cold dense vapours. We took our usual tea, and fasting, once more mounted our horses, in the hope of reaching the next post before the day was far advanced.

As we proceeded, we found the country now abounding in larch. Sometimes we were ascending and sometimes descending; and as the way was difficult, our march was slow. Late in the afternoon, we reached the fourteenth post, called Allack Tinska, upon the River Allack, and about twenty-five versts, according to the judgment of the guides, from the place at which we had set out in the morning, and at 150 versts from the last post.

The joy of the horses, when they obtained the first glimpse of the Yakoute hut and the green meadow in which it stood, with a Tungouse wigwam beside it, seemed quite equal to our own; and as they increased their pace, they broke the silence of the *smotritel's* dwelling-place by loudly neighing all together until we alighted at the door of the hut.

The debt of gratitude which we owed the poor beasts from which we were now to separate, was scarcely less than that which we had felt towards those from which we last parted. Nothing, indeed, but the exploits of our horses in the swamps could have exceeded in devotion the patience and the spirits with which these animals had suffered hunger and fatigue during the passage of these difficult mountain passes. That which I rode upon this occasion, was the easiest paced and gentlest of his species that I ever mounted. When we pressed their necks, in the same manner as with the last, as we handed them all over to the *smotritel*, with an injunction to let them feed as soon as possible, I remembered my distrust when I first saw

e shaggy coat and dwarf stature of that which I was ride; and I could not help thinking of the difference e sometimes find between the first impressions made pon us by a new acquaintance of rough exterior, and e feelings with which we take leave of the same erson, after attributes of a higher order than appearnce have gained our respect and regard.

We would gladly have continued our march for four nore hours, had we found any sort of provision here hat we could have carried with us. Nevertheless, we ad at our present disposition food for the whole party hat was equal to the greatest luxuries that our imaginations had painted when hungry, and we could not ail to sup to-night, and breakfast to-morrow most umptuously, if we stayed. No sooner, indeed, was our condition known to the Yakoute *smotritel*, than his wife descended into a kind of vault by the side of the hut, and brought up a large bowl full of milk; and we were scarcely at ease in the wigwam, which we chose to enter in preference to the hut, before a fine mess of cream, cranberries, and cedar nuts, was placed upon the ground before us. Of bread, indeed, there was none. But this was a luxury that we had had no expectation of finding. Our hopes had been chiefly set on beef, which the Yakoutes rarely want at any season, where there is any number of them together. The weather was wholly too hot during the middle of the day for the transport of cream to any distance, the thermometer being at 17 and 18 degrees; so we determined at any rate to remain here for the night. The dish upon which we supped was these good people's only constant food; and both the berries and the nuts which we ate were the product of the previous year. Sometimes the Yakoutes reduce the cream to a thick lumpy substance, which is similar to new cheese, and which we tasted the next day for the first time. For

the present we ate of the dish above mentioned in manner proportioned to our great appetites after long an abstinence, with the security of the past and further horse exercise, and the mixture of berries against the consequences of indulging, after so long fasting, in food not the lightest and the safest for supper, perhaps, upon ordinary occasions.

The next morning we rose very early; and after breakfasting upon the same dish upon which we had supped, and feeling much the better for the two good meals our Yakoutes filled some skins which they had provided for the purpose with cream, and another bag of somewhat smaller dimensions with cranberries, and a third with cedar nuts; and with this good provision we recommenced our journey.

There was little chance of attaining the next post, which was at the distance of above 200 versts, within four days with the most favourable weather; but as we were approaching a lower country, there was the greater prospect of killing something to supply our wants by the way; and if we should but be fortunate enough to meet with a bear, we had no doubt that we should be able to put an end to all our troubles on account of the condition of our larder.

We began the journey to-day by crossing the River Allack in the *smotritel's* canoe, while our horses swam. But soon after this we encountered another of those obstacles to the passage of travellers through this part of the country, with which we were so painfully familiar; and for three hours we were wading again in one of the worst description of swamps, and which we estimated at about five versts in breadth.

After passing this swamp, we found the country covered with the larch tree exclusively for twenty-five or thirty versts. About mid-day we stopped as usual, and took our *samovar* and a mess of cream. After

is, we recrossed the Allack lower down the stream, d continued our road along its shores until the evening, when we encamped upon a spot where we had a lerable pasture for the horses, and where, before we ept, we finished the remainder of our cream, now well urned to the kind of cheese above mentioned.

We allowed ourselves but very little rest during this ight, chiefly that we might have the greater chance of illing some ducks in the river in the morning. We ad seen no birds, save a single blackbird, since the irst days of our journey; but the guides informed us hat all the rivers in this vicinity were occasionally isited by wild ducks at this season; and we were full of hope of getting a shot at some of them. Thus, after rising and taking our *samovar* at an early hour, and a few cranberries and cedar nuts which we had reserved, while the Yakoutes took their bark mess, now flavoured with a few cranberries, the merchant and myself set off to trace the banks of the river for two or three versts, in hopes of catching some unwary prey tranquilly sleeping; but we returned without having seen or heard the voice of any living creature fit for food or sport.

Early in this day's journey we crossed several valleys filled with snow, through which rivulets generally passed, and the courses of which we followed between walls of snow about twenty feet in height. In the middle of the day, we crossed a glacier of about five versts in breadth, and subsequently several smaller, honeycombed every where, and furnishing running streams, the beds of which were sometimes the ice and sometimes the solid ground; and we had here the same inconveniences as upon a previous occasion, from the excessive heat at noon and from the quantities of mosquitoes. The country around, too, presented the same bold features as that where we encountered the last glaciers, with several cones plainly of volcanic formation.

As we descended again very gradually towards t lower country, we found the vegetation much finer th any we had seen at the same elevation upon the oppos side of the mountains. The trees, chiefly, which w now observed flourishing along the sides of the hills which we passed, were the larch, the mountain ash, a the lime. The larch was growing much more lux riantly than we had any where before seen it. We ob served some of these trees now with trunks lar enough for the masts of small sea-vessels. The ash w small and thinly sown; but the limes most surpris us by their dimensions. Some of those that we me sured were from forty-five to fifty-five inches in circum ference.

We had a little rain during this day; but our ro upon the whole was good; and when we thought w had made above sixty versts, we deemed it time to stop and finding here a spot where our horses had by n means a bad pasture, we pitched our tent, took ou *samovar*, and, for the second time during the journey, lay down to rest quite supperless and very hungry.

Early the next morning we passed over several streams, and several more broad valleys filled with snow. At mid-day we crossed the deepest stream we had yet met with, over a portion of which our horses had to swim, by which we were immersed, as on a previous occasion, up to our waists. This would have been a trouble to us at the beginning of our journey: but we had at this time seen too many similar, and still felt one that was much worse, to make any account of this—

> "Where the greater malady is fix'd,
> The lesser is scarce felt,"

— we were even suffering from the want of food, the greatest of all the evils that we at any time endured.

Ve found the soil of better quality, and the produc-
ıs of the country more numerous, as we proceeded;
. among the varieties of shrubs which abounded near
streams, we observed the rose, which was now in full
om. We crossed however several more valleys filled
:h ice and snow, and similar to those we had before
ıssed over; and we waded several more deep and rapid
eams. Towards evening, we found the woods again
ıolly consisting of larch. At length, we encamped
ıon the bank of one of the streams, according to the
dgment of our guides, about fifty versts from the next
ation.

Our condition for want of food we could not now
isguise from ourselves, was becoming alarming, and as
ıon as the tent was erected, we held a formal council
f all the party, to discuss seriously a question which
ıe had already informally put to one another during
he day, whether we should not kill one of the horses,
o satisfy our craving appetites and escape all further
:isks; and I do not believe that any body of coun-
:illors of any crowned head in the world, whether full
or fasting, or puffing the *chiboock* and dozing, ever
discussed more dispassionately any vital question con-
cerning the blood of their own species, than we de-
liberated upon and discussed this question, touching so
nearly our own proper safety and interests, and the
blood only of a single quadruped.

The Yakoutes pleaded the cause of the beasts upon
the score of humanity, as we could not help thinking, by
the manner in which they regarded our shaggy com-
panions, while we talked of shedding the blood of one
of them. For themselves, they made us understand,
they never killed one of their horses, until they had
passed five whole days together without any sort of
food. It would be a shame, then, we said to each other,
that while we had tea and a morsel of sugar, and the

prospect before us of better and more lawful food than horseflesh, to destroy one of the creatures given us to relieve and lighten our labour, and even to refine and embellish civilised life, and not to devour. It seemed as if it would be mere wantonness and gluttony. It would, at least, have been an act of which our semi-barbarous companions were not capable.

This important question being thus set at rest, the merchant and myself took our guns, and stole through the bushes by the side of the stream near which we were encamped, with our thoughts full now of the blood of an enemy instead of a friend of our species, and of that of the water fowl, both of which could not but be lawful food, and very good if we could get them. And we determined to practise all the cunning we were masters of, in this attempt to supply, if it were possible, our natural wants.

As we advanced slowly and cautiously, sometimes approaching the edge of the wood upon our hands and knees, and peeping at intervals between the bushes, to see if any thing were floating upon the stream, I thought I never enjoyed sport so keenly before.

When we rise twice or thrice a day from a full meal, we cannot be in a right frame either of body or mind for the proper enjoyments of the chase. Our sluggish spirits then want the true incentive to action, which should be hunger, with the hope before us of filling a craving stomach. I could remember once before being for a time dependent upon the gun for food, and feeling a touch of the charm of savage life —for every condition of humanity has its good as well as its evil—but never till now did I fully comprehend the attachment of the sensitive, not drowsy Indian, to his manner of living, which is found nevertheless to be so great, that though the years of his race, as he cannot but know, are already numbered,

reason of his refusing to adopt the mode of life the civilised man, yet he will persist rather than w and reap, or attempt to acquire any of the useful ts which we practise. This, indeed, is a trait in e character of the wild man, which those who bour to reclaim and save his race from extinction, pear to have studied far too little. Touch but the assions which the chase excites, which are the very ssence of his being, by other motives to action, and ease at the same time to fill his mind with revolting errors and with gloomy impressions of futurity, such s are taught by very good, but often, certainly, ery weak-minded men, and who shall say that all we wish to effect may not be accomplished?

As we skulked along the banks of the brook, under cover of the bushes, peeping out and surveying the stream at intervals, the slightest noise caused by the wind, or by the running waters, as it reached our ears, instantly filled our imaginations with the liveliest images that hunger and hope could produce. One minute we thought we heard the splashing of the wings of a whole flock of ducks alighting upon the water, and the next we seemed to perceive, half concealed by the dusky firs that crowded the shores upon the opposite side of the river, a fine fat bear drinking securely at the stream. The most hungry wolves never sought more eagerly for a lamb quenching its thirst at a brook, nor the wiliest snake to catch a nobler prey sleeping, than we now sought if perchance we might find a bear drinking within our reach, or ducks floating tranquilly upon the surface of the water.

While we were thus intently bent upon our object, suddenly the sound of the voice of some bird or other, whose note we did not recognise, reached our attentive ears. We now pressed the ground yet more gingerly than ever; and presently we observed a blackbird

skipping from tree to tree and from branch to branch among the tall firs around us. Our attention thus drawn from the pursuit of worthier prey, was now fixed upon this poor bird; and lest she should escape us, we determined that we would both fire at her together. Whether it were that it was her hour of rest, and we had disturbed her, and she was not yet well awake, we observed that she had not her natural voice, and that she had no fear of us. With a note more like that of the magpie than that common to her own species, she flew towards us, and perched upon a tree within less than half gun-shot from the spot upon which we were standing. Yet so eager were we to obtain this delicate morsel for our supper, that we persisted still in firing at the same moment; and the triggers were no sooner pulled than the massacre was accomplished. But in the name of all the spirits of the wood, of what chagrin to us was it not the cause! At the report of our guns, a brace of ducks from beneath the very banks of the river upon which we trod, rose from the water, and passing within shot of us, flew further up the stream. We seemed like merchants who, upon the loss of a ship, should be found to have insured only her jolly-boat, which had floated safely on shore. And again, upon picking up our prey, we had the misfortune to find that one-half of the little bird was shot away into the air, and the other half so mangled, that it would not have made half a meal for a sparrow hawk; while, without making any account of the Yakoutes, we had to divide it between two men with more eager appetites than the most ravenous eagles.

Renewed hopes and fresh excitement, however, soon possessed us. We had at least seen a brace of fine ducks that, we agreed, appeared, as they flew by us, as fat and plump as if they had been bred in some royal aviary, or park; and they were still perhaps not

from us. Thus we loaded again, and renewed our rsuit with increased cunning and caution, excited by sh and greater hopes. Not a fox in the country ıld have excelled us in these necessary accomplish-ɜnts for the ends we had in view. And now, after ɜeping for a few hundred yards, and peeping out upon e river at every opening, we again espied the object our renewed labours, the two ducks, floating and emming the current in the middle of the stream. I ɜver wished to be invisible till now, nor longed to ıve even such wings only as those of Cupid, or of ıriel, or of some sylph, to lighten a little the pressure f the hands and knees upon the ground.

At length, after creeping on as close to the earth as erpents in sight of *their* prey, we reached an ad-antageous spot from which to take our aim, without ıaving caused any alarm. As we were not quite close ogether, and the ducks were swimming apart from each ɔther, and we dared not speak for fear of disturbing ;hem, we settled by signs which each of us should aim ıt; and in a minute the triggers were drawn, both ɜhots were fatal, and the ducks turned on their backs.

But our prey was not yet secured. The current which the birds had been stemming while they were swimming was strong, and the instant they turned over they began to drift rapidly down the stream. But at perceiving this, we both plunged into the water, and after wading for a short distance, found ourselves swim-ming. However after a good *ducking*—a very appropri-ate term, from whatever it may be derived—we finally secured our prey, and we had the satisfaction to find they were two black ducks, and quite as fat as they had seemed. Need it be said, upon what a brave mess of *stchee* we supped this evening, and with what new vigour we were inspired for the prosecution of our next day's journey?

## CHAP. XXIII.

JOURNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TOWARDS OCHOTSK — *contin*

Repose with Hopes for the Morrow.—Glacial Plains.—B and deep Streams.—Change in the Face of the Country the Vegetation.—Obstruction of the Streams.—Rugged Gro —Terror of our Horses of the Bear.—Fruitless Search Bears.—Arrival at a Post.—Relief.—Cream, Cranberries Cedar Nuts.—Restless Night.—Mosquitoes.—Disappoint in renewing our Travelling Stock.—Intelligence of the adva Party of the Caravan.—Heat.—Stony Streams.—Fl Country.—Morass.—Experiment to try the Courage of Yakoutes.—Unsatisfactory Solution of the Question at prese —Stimulated to Exertion by Hunger.—Vegetation.—La —Flowers.—Currants.—Delight of our Men at finding So Currants.—A Bear Hunt.—Torrents.—Conjecture concerni the Cause of the Vegetation here.—Streams.—Indications Approach to the Sea.—Come up with the Advance of th Caravan.—Their Loss of Two or Three Men and One Hors killed by the Bear.—Tale of Woe.

Although it was long after midnight before we la down upon the night of our duck feast, we rose at an early hour for the next day's march; and while the Yakoutes were preparing the horses, we took our accustomed *samovar*. The grateful beverage seemed to us this morning more refreshing than ever; and we commenced the day's march under the favourable auspices of fine weather, and with the cheering hope of attaining the next post before the close of the day.

During the first portion of this day's march, we passed over several glacial plains similar to those which have been described. After these, we crossed one or two streams that were broader and deeper than any we had met with since we passed the highest ridge of

ıe mountains. The face of the country and the ve-
ɜtation, also, were much changed, and our descent was
ow more apparent. Instead of the varieties in kind
mong the trees and shrubs of the climate, which had
ıtely been so great a relief to our weary sight, the
ırch here entirely covered the ground; and the trees
ɜere of a finer growth than those which we had seen
ningled among the varied productions of the better
oils, or the more elevated lands.

At noon we reposed as usual for an hour; and after
ɜenewing our march, we found still the same country
and the same obstructions of running streams and
rugged ground, which continued to impede our progress.

A single incident only upon this day's journey relieved the tediousness of the march. Our horses had been constantly raising alarm by their terror of the bears, and exhibiting to us the inconsistencies in the composition of their character. They daily faced dangers that were a thousand times greater than any to be dreaded on account of the bears, and displayed attributes for which we deify our own species; and yet the mere scent of their furred enemy of the forest reduced them to the most timid of the four-footed tribes. Our chief guide's horse, which was first in the order of march, now at a particular spot where the underwood was thick, was seized with more alarm than usual; and spreading his terror through the troop by his snorting, and his determination to go no further in that direction, brought us all to a stand. The alarm of the animals was now indeed so much greater than at any time before while we were in their company, that we thought we had got at last exactly what we desired, and we made our dispositions to profit by the hazard. We turned a little back upon our steps, and tied all the beasts to the same tree, and left one of the Yakoutes to guard them and keep them quiet, while the rest of us returned to

the expected combat. With our various national a the Yakoutes refusing two pistols which we c spare, and offered them, we now scoured the w around with every reasonable hope of the heart o bear for our dinner; for our number and our weap were sufficient to leave but a poor chance to a animal not very quick indeed, of doing any one us an injury, or of escaping after he might be wit our reach. But after a full hour's search, no sign any habitant of the forest whatever was to be seen heard. Nevertheless, we had still great trouble i leading our horses past the spot at which they had tak the alarm. By coaxing and caressing, however, an firing pistols, which seemed more effective than an thing else, we succeeded. But we had no sooner re mounted them, after we were twenty or thirty yard past the dreaded spot, than it required at least as much exertion to restrain their quick onward march as we had just made to oblige them to continue their way. The opinion of the Yakoutes was, that a bear had been sleeping at this place, and had gone off before our approach; but we found no signs of any thing of the kind; and as Nature had not given us the some olfactory sensitiveness that she had bestowed upon our *chevaline* companions, we were still too hungry to allow of our losing the time that the pursuit would require without any such guide to direct our search.

The manner in which the Yakoutes face the bear has been before described. These men informed us, that it was very rarely indeed that any of their people were killed by this ferocious animal, but that they were frequently slightly, and sometimes severely wounded after they had closed with him and given him his mortal blow. One of themselves, indeed, had had his left arm lacerated and his shoulder scarred by one of these fierce beasts.

At length, after four days of fatiguing march since quitted the last post, at about six o'clock this even- we reached the river and station of Tudomo estowska. We found here a very obliging Yakoute *otritel;* and as soon as our most pressing want was own, his wife, who was to our minds the prettiest as ll as the best-natured woman we had seen since we tered the Yakoute country, set immediately to work provide for us the best fare in her power; and after king the usual leave of our noble beasts, we entered e hut.

These good people were lodged in a rather curious rt of dwelling, in construction and appearance some- ing between a Yakoute ordinary hut and a Tungouse igwam. It was of the same hexagonal form of which e had already observed several, and open at the top f the pointed roof; but in other respects it was like he wigwam. It was nevertheless divided into two arts; and of one of these we were offered exclusive possession. We were not, however, disposed to take advantage of this; and before we had time to seat ourselves upon the benches under the walls around the general apartment, the hostess reappeared with a plentiful supply of the same dish of cream, cranberries, and cedar nuts, that we had so much enjoyed at the last station, but which, though excellent, and ample for all our present wants, gave us but little hopes of finding a supply of more suitable articles for our next day's journey.

We did not pass a very agreeable night at this post, on account of the mosquitoes, which were here in such clouds, that the good people were obliged to keep constant fires of cattle manure alight in the middle of the wigwam, the odour and half-stifling effects of which made us regret that we had not pitched our own tent.

In the morning, although we had not had much hope

of being well provisioned for the next day's march, were a little disappointed, when over the same dish breakfast as that upon which we had supped, to find that there was nothing whatever to be procured to add to the three components of which our late and early meal consisted. We did, however, obtain a few more of the cranberries to carry with us than upon the last occasion; and, although these are not very good food without cream, they conserve better than anything else. Thus the beginning at least of the journey before us would be more favourable than the last. And besides this, the distance was happily shorter, and the rivers permitting, the journey would occupy a day less. Moreover, we had here the satisfaction to learn that the advance party of the merchant's caravan had only left this post the day before our arrival, which rendered it probable that we should overtake them in about two days at the furthest; and they, we knew, had provisions even among the articles of their merchandise.

We left this station at an earlier hour than we usually commenced our day's march, bent upon making every effort to overtake the merchant's advanced party, if it were possible, before the close of the next day. During the first part of the morning we were enveloped in a dense mist; but as the day advanced the atmosphere became clear, and the thermometer at noon was at 19 degrees of heat, which was the highest to which it rose at any time during our journey.

Our progress was slower to-day, notwithstanding our efforts, than it had been during the two or three preceding days, owing to the number of stony streams that lay in our way. We had sometimes to follow the courses of these for a verst or two, as well as to cross at intervals from side to side; so that when we stopped to repose for an hour, after seven or eight hours of

.arch, our guides did not think we had made above ·venty versts. Our journey was, nevertheless, now cross a country less hilly than any we had seen since ·e arrived at the foot of the western range of the ıountains; and the distant view in our front presented ıills of less altitude than those which we were leaving ıehind us.

During the latter half of this day, the obstructions to ɔur march became greater; and for four or five hours we were once more involved in a low morass, to the difficulties of the passage of which, one instance only could be compared, among all those we had experienced, since the commencement of our journey from Yakoutsk. We had accomplished, however, as we believed, about forty five versts, when we encamped, as we were accustomed to do whenever it was in our power, upon the bank of a clear stream.

We had this evening the opportunity of making a little experiment, for the purpose of solving some doubts in our minds concerning a report of the Yakoute character. A remark has been already made, upon the manner in which the very soul of this people seems to have succumbed to the genius and authority of their conquerors. Such, indeed, is the apparent character of their submission, that an opinion prevails among even Russians that have lived among them, that they are arrant cowards. This impression, as we became acquainted with the men who accompanied us, appeared to be so inconsistent with our knowledge of their readiness to face the bear so badly armed, that it was a frequent subject of conversation with us upon the journey, and we had some time since determined, that in case we should find any opportunity, we would endeavour to ascertain the correctness of the Russian opinion, or the error upon which it might be founded; and a little circumstance which seemed to make the oc-

casion favourable for the experiment, happened in evening while we were over our *samovar*, and the Yakoutes were around the fire.

Many, even of those who have lived or sojourned in a season in thinly-peopled countries, or in the woods and have seen more clearly and felt more impressively the dependence of man upon man, than those who have not seen the phases in the varied degrees and shades of human society which different modes of life exhibit, although they may have lost the superfluous portions of the arrogance of rank throughout its grades, and learned to respect equally every man who performs worthily the part which fortune has assigned him, may nevertheless have experienced the inconveniences attending a relaxation of self-importance, where the peculiarity of the case has not seemed to warrant what at other times might have been both politic and commendable. Our Yakoutes were at all times attentive to their duties, though they did not neglect their amusements. During the time of leisure, and frequently on the way, they diverted themselves by singing; and though their notes seemed to us to be monotonous, and not worth listening to on their own account, we deemed them proofs of the cheerful disposition of the people; and where there is cheerfulness, who shall fear treachery, or the consequences of any evil passion? Several times, however, during our sufferings from hunger, we had some suspicions that there was a little more than quite harmless cheerfulness in their songs. We thought, that we traced through indescribable signs, not merely exultation, but even some contempt of us, on account of the superiority they possessed in relation to the prosecution of the labour in which we were together engaged, in having a dish always at hand, by which they could at least escape the immediate consequences of hunger. But the manner in which they were singing and talk-

had not been mistaken, and that our familiarity with r friends had had the effect of so relaxing their spect, as to induce them to ridicule us in their songs. fact, we were in reality offended; and we chose e opportunity to try the truth of the impression prelent concerning the character of their race, and hether they really had the awe they were stated to ave of civilised man, such as we considered ourselves, r whether it were rather the law in cool blood that hey dreaded.

Our plan having been agreed upon, was thus put into execution. We issued rather suddenly from the tent without our pistols at our girdles, and while we spoke some rough words to the men in our own several tongues, myself, as the least likely, from being a foreigner, to strike them with any terror of the law, advanced to where they were seated, and seized the shaggy hair of the heads of two of them that were sitting together, while my companion, not to make the menace too great, stood like a witness merely of what occurred, though ready to aid in case of any opposition to this apparent violence. But the very instant the act was done, the whole frames of these two powerful men shook, while the two men that were seated opposite to them sat still and seemed to experience hardly less trepidation than their comrades. Thus it was settled, at all events, that at so trifling a menace from two men, one of whom was not even a Russian, four Yakoutes were reduced to the condition of the lamb in the claws of the wolf. In a future chapter will appear the reason for this particular account of this circumstance.

We allowed ourselves, upon this night, but a very few hours of repose. Hunger disposed, and hope stimulated us to make all possible exertions to come up

with the party we were following; and as our horses had here very good pasture at night, there was no let to our efforts upon their account.

The district through which we now passed abounded in stony torrents; but in other respects, the travelling was better than it had been at any time since we encountered the first obstructions to our journey; and the face of the country began here to wear a more cheerful and agreeable aspect. For the endless fir sown over the whole surface of the ground, in larger or smaller quantities depending upon the character and quality of the soil and the elevation of the country, and exhibiting only the little varieties of colour and foliage which their several tribes admit, we had now around us a mixture of the several perennial green-leafed trees that have been mentioned as growing in spare quantities in different parts of the country through which we passed during the journey, with a larger proportion of the limes of more luxuriant growth. Along the banks of some of the brooks, we now found strawberries; and here and there we perceived open spaces covered with a variety of shrubs, among which were mingled currant bushes, the fruit of which, though not sufficiently advanced to exhibit colour, was evidently of the red sort. Our men were in raptures of delight at the sight of this fruit even in its present state, and they picked and ate quantities of it: but we reserved our appetites for something more solid in prospect. A variety of flowers were also seen flourishing here among the brambles and underwood, amidst which the rose and the flag-iris were predominant.

This change in the appearance of the country and the vegetation, was as unexpected as it was agreeable to us, seeing that we had yet scarcely recrossed the 60th degree of latitude, and it seemed to make some amends for our physical deprivations. It was easy to

which now required constant encouragement to persuade them to proceed, that the bear had also a particular inclination, if not for the beauties of nature here exhibited in the vegetable world in so much greater profusion than generally in this snowy land, at least for the fruits with which the country abounded.

We reposed to-day at an earlier hour than usual, upon the banks of a fresh torrent, which abounded on both sides with the shrubs and flowers above-mentioned, in full bloom; and such was the weather and the temperature of the atmosphere, that it was difficult to reconcile our experience of the past and that of the present, and the latitude in which we were, which, if we did not take into account other influences than those which at first appear, seemed full of contradictions and inconsistencies. Perhaps, this fine portion of country, which we found afterwards of limited extent, may owe its verdure to the prevalence of calms arising from its position being that at which the winds from the sea encounter those from the mountains, which in several other countries it has fallen to my lot to observe, has a remarkable influence on climate.

Early in the afternoon we came to a stream, the bed of which we made our road; and after crossing it four or five times with not much difficulty, we were once more well immersed in attaining the bank, where we resumed our direct path towards the coast.

Before the fourth hour after noon on this day, a strong, chilly, damp wind blowing from the south-east, met us, and was the first announcement of our approach to the sea. The country continued to exhibit the same aspect and the same vegetation as we advanced; and after a march of seventeen hours, we had the satisfaction of coming up with the advance of the merchants'

caravan which we had so anxiously longed and ardently striven to overtake.

The men had just discharged their beasts, and were preparing their meal as we joined them. The meeting upon our side was one of unmingled satisfaction, until we perceived the whole party which had crowded around us, were under the influence of some lively trouble, for which, indeed, we soon found that they had full cause. They had lost no less than two of their men and one of their horses, upon the previous day, by the bear, and had another of their men still missing, who they feared had experienced the fate of the other two.

The tale of woes, as it was related to us, was as follows:—Upon the party, who were all natives, mustering their horses in the morning previous to that of the present day, they found one of them missing, and to search for which one of the men remained behind after the departure of the rest. But as this man did not make his appearance as expected, soon after the departure of the party, two of his companions returned, in order to discover the cause of his detention or aid his search for the missing horse. In the mean time, the rest continued their march until they stopped for their accustomed hour of repose at noon, when, neither of the men that had returned upon their steps appearing, the cause of their absence was discussed, and there being little doubt that some accident or other had happened, three more of the men, as the rest resumed their journey, retraced also the steps of the caravan, determined at all events to solve the mystery. These men saw and heard nothing either of the missing man or the rest, until their arrival at the spot where the caravan had passed the night. But after now commencing a search in the wood around, they very soon stumbled upon an enormous bear, occupied in tearing and eating one of the men. Horrified at the sight,

y attacked the ferocious beast without an instant's sitation, and two of their poniards were fixed in breast before he had time to spring from his hind gs, upon which he had raised himself to meet his emies. The bear was no sooner dispatched, than ey found the body of another of their companions, hose internal parts had been drawn out and devoured. he two slain men proved to be the one that had remained and one of those that had first returned. Moreover, at a few paces from the spot upon which hey found one of the men, lay also the carcass of he missing horse. But of the other man of the irst two that had returned, they found no trace, and no one knew any thing about him up to the time we joined them; but it was supposed that he had met the same fate as his companions, from some other bear of parallel strength. Nor had he, indeed, been found, dead or alive, nearly a month after this, when the last detachment of the caravan reached the coast.

After what I had heard of the dexterity of the Yakoutes in their combats with the bear, I was much surprised at this account of the death of two of them, who had evidently not wanted courage, and killed, too, by the same beast. But when the skin of the animal that the conquerors had brought with them was shown to us, it appeared that their enemy was of such an enormous size, that we wondered rather at the courage of any man whatever, in attacking him with nothing but the miserable native weapon. The Yakoutes themselves acknowledged, that this bear was of a size that many among them, single-handed, would not have attacked. But they conjectured, that the first man that was killed, enraged at seeing the animal devouring his horse, had, under too much excitement, used his weapon awkwardly, while the bear was probably more furious than on ordinary occasions, on account of being at the

time over his prey; and the same reasons, exagge they thought in the case of the second man, by his se the animal tearing his companion, had produced sim results. It appeared, however, that the bear had ceived one wound only previously to that by which was killed.

After we had heard the gloomy tale of this unfor nate accident, we supped with the captain of the par upon the real luxuries of biscuit and the very same s of dry chips of mutton which we had despised until had none left, and peas; after which, we pitched o tent near one of the fires that were blazing, and i down to rest.

## CHAP. XXIV.

RNEY FROM YAKOUTSK TOWARDS OCHOTSK—*continued.*

m at Night.—Set out under more favourable Auspices than sual.—Generosity tempered with Prudence.—Ascend another ange of Hills.—Narrow Plains.—A fertile Valley.—Forests.—Varieties of Shrubs.—The Rose.—Encamp by a Stream.—Terror of our Horses of the Bear.—Yakoute Hut.—A native Hunter.—Capital Fare.—Swallows.—Dogs.—Encamp by the Huts.—Renew our Journey at a late Hour.—Hills.—View of the Mountains of Ochota.—Woody Plains.—River Ochota.—Encamp by a Brook.—Chalky-coloured Stream.—Hungry Man and Dogs amidst Plenty.—Difficult Passage of the Ochota.—Theory respecting the Rise and Fall of the River.—Torrents.—Stony Streams.—Larch.—Birches.—Second Pass of the Ochota.—Encamp.—Illness of one of our Guides.—Terror of the Horses at the Bear.—Second Passage of the River.—Country less fertile.—Third Passage of the River.—Arrival at Ochotsk.—Yakoute Words.

During the night that we were encamped with the advanced party of the caravan, there was a severe thunder-storm and heavy rain; but, at the hour at which we usually commenced the day's journey, the weather was fine, and we left the party, to resume our march under more favourable auspices than we had set out for several preceding days. Not only were we now furnished with such coarse necessaries as we had a just right to claim, but at the moment of our departure, the captain of the detachment presented to us a portion of a great sterlet pie, with which his wife had provided him for his own use, before he left Yakoutsk; saying at the same time, that he had been unwilling to tempt us when we arrived, with what he

was sure we should, under the effects of hunger, have used as intemperately as his horses would their food were they put loose in a fresh pasture upon ending a day's journey, and suffered afterwards the bad consequences which always attend excess.

The first fifteen versts of our way after we renewed our journey, lay across the same fertile country as that over which we had passed on the preceding day. But our progress was greatly impeded, in some places by pits of mud, and at others by the streams which were full of larger stones, and deeper and not less rapid than those over which we had passed upon the more elevated lands.

After this, we ascended another range of hills of no great altitude, but where we found several narrow plains locked in by surrounding peaks, and full of snow and ice. They appeared like the beds of ancient lakes from which the water had been drawn off, after some change in the geological configuration of the country.

After descending this range of hills, we came into a vale of extreme fertility. The green and broad-leafed trees that chiefly flourished here, were the lime and the birch; of the hardier species of the fir tribes which were more familiar to our eyes, we observed only the larch. But the forest was the more remarkable from its affording the first instance which we met with of any trees indicating age. The wood was open, and the trunks of some of the limes were from three to four feet in circumference, and the branches were much larger than the proportion which is usual to that size of trunk in most forest trees, but they had very few small boughs, and very little fresh foliage.

Along the banks of a slow rivulet by which our path lay, we observed shrubs of various kinds in full bloom, and growing with such luxuriance as in several places to obscure the view of the stream. Among these, the

In the evening, we pitched our tent as usual by a ning stream. But we had much trouble on this asion until midnight, arising from the terror of our rses of the bears. The poor beasts seemed to have eir natural enemies continually in their minds. It as our custom to make but a small fire until the time going to bed, in order that if any of the ferocious nimals, after peeping out of the wood, should be urious to know more of us, they might not be deterred rom approaching near enough to give us an opportunity f trying the superior virtue of our arms over those of he men of the same forest in which they were bred. But as the underwood was here much thicker than usual around us, this seeming want of caution did not meet the approbation of our quadruped companions, and we were tormented by their fears until we made two or three good fires.

The first part of the next day's march was across a country similar to that which we last passed over. After five or six hours' travelling, we came to the banks of a broad part of the River Ora, which we had several times previously crossed where it was but a shallow and narrow stream. We found a Yakoute here in one of the little huts of sexangular form, and with a canoe, in which we passed the river while our horses were driven across in the usual manner.

There was another hut of the same description, upon the side of the stream upon which we landed; and the good man who inhabited it, invited us to enter, and partake of a meal of the best refreshment he had to offer.

The arrangement of this Yakoute's dwelling excited our curiosity, on account of its differing from that of all of his race that we had hitherto seen. It was of the

ordinary form, and was furnished with the same kind of mud benches as the rest. But instead of the mere emptiness of the huts in which we had previously reposed, the walls of this were hung with all sorts of trophies of the chase. Bears', wolves', and foxes' heads and the branched horns of rein-deer, were suspended around; upon lines drawn across the hut above our heads, was hanging a quantity of dried salmon, and upon several shelves were placed water-vessels made of birch-bark, and perfectly similar to those used by the North American Indians.

The meal to which we now sat down, consisted of salmon soup or stew, which had been cooked out of doors in the lid of an iron pot, and was served up in the same remnant, probably of a perfect vessel, which these Yakoutes had once possessed. This novel mess, however, was a great luxury to us, and with the aid of wooden spoons of our host's own handiwork, we made an excellent meal.

The confidence with which the swallows take up their abode in the Yakoute huts, and the Tungouse wigwams, that are open at the top, is remarkable. Here four families of this species of the winged tribes had built their nests within our reach; and they were so much accustomed to human company in the dwelling which they had chosen, that they continued to fly backwards and forwards, to bring food to their young ones, which were unfledged in the nests, while we stood close by them. We observed that their colour differed from that of the several varieties of their species commonly seen in Europe. Instead of being of the nicely mingled hues of the blue, and black, and purple of our swallows, their dark plumage was universally tinged with a dusky red.

The more than ordinary approach to comfort that we found here, caused us to make some inquiries before we

ted this hut; and we learned that its inhabitants e especially expert, and had been very successful, their hunts for the bear in particular, by which they l always an article of commerce to exchange with e merchants that passed by.

Upon renewing our march, we found precisely the me country as that over which we had passed during e earlier part of the day; and in the evening we eached the post of Metinska, at 200 versts from the st at which we had changed, and within fifty-four ersts of the haven in which were centred all our hopes of the termination of our arduous journey.

The Yakoute *smotritel* we found here, was lodged in a hut of the usual hexagonal form, and deeply set in the ground; but he had opposite his door two other huts, which, unaccustomed as we were to see even two houses together, presented to us quite the appearance of a little settlement. But if this people want the advantages of society of their own species, they certainly live, whether that want be the cause of this or not, upon the best terms with the winged tribes we have just seen, which are found every where within and without their dwellings. Here the swallows were as abundant as any where; and they were still tamer than those we saw at the last Yakoute dwelling at which we had stopped. Several of the little winged families had their nests within and without the huts, no higher than five feet from the ground; and they were so familiar with our species, that when we took some of the squalling unfledged ones in our hands, it seemed to cause no alarm to the parents, which continued to make their flights backwards and forwards through the air, and ever and anon to return and feed their crying offspring that remained in the nest, while we stood by with the others in our hands.

But there was here a greater novelty to us than

this, a regular pack of the travelling dogs of country, which we now saw for the first time. dogs are not, indeed, generally used for travel further westward in Siberia than the foot of mountains over which we had passed.

I shall only at present remark concerning these ani that it appeared to me that the Siberian dog increased fierceness at every town as we advanced eastward, fr the time of crossing the Ural Mountains until arrival at Irkoutsk, where none are upon any acco allowed to run loose. In general, even in West Siberia, the dogs are tied up in the yards; but t practice was not there universal. These dogs, howev are of a different race, as we shall afterwards mo fully see; and those we now first saw were loose, a were lying strewed round the house; and wheth asleep or awake, took no notice whatever either o ourselves or our horses.

As the Yakoutes' huts here were by no mean inviting to enter, and the weather was fine, we preferre pitching our tent to passing the night within either o them; and after partaking abundantly of the truly national dish of the Yakoutes, the cream and the berries, with which we were now becoming quite familiar, we reposed, as we were accustomed to do, upon our fresh beds of spruce boughs.

The next day, some difficulty about our horses delayed us, and we did not recommence our journey before a late hour in the morning. Soon after leaving this post, we ascended a range of hills, that form towards the north some ridges of considerable altitude, which are known by the name of the Ochota Mountains. When we were at the highest elevation we attained during the passage of them, we had a far fairer and more extensive view than we had at any time obtained while we were in the mountains over which we had

eviously passed. In the direction of the country to which we were advancing, appeared a fine wooded ain as far as the bounds of vision, in which the ep green foliage with which it was covered, was reeved by the occasional view of some part of the River chota, while the rest remained concealed by the serentine course of the stream and the undulations of he ground. In the direction of the north, the high nd irregular form of the above-mentioned mountains erminated the view; while in that of the south appeared an undulating country; and towards that from which we came, a wooded plain, which seemed bounded by an irregular range of mountain peaks.

After a difficult descent from these hills, we encamped in the plain which commenced at their base, according to our invariable custom whenever in our power, by the side of a fresh running stream.

The next morning, as we advanced we found the fertility of this plain greater than that of any portion of the country through which our path had hitherto lain. Early in the day, we passed by several Yakoute huts, where we were plentifully supplied with cream. The distances from one another at which the several families that inhabited these houses were dwelling, in the midst of a country where there is no scarcity of pasture to maintain their cattle, which furnish the sole means of their subsistence, seemed indicative of their race being of a gloomy and unsocial disposition. We believed this, however, not to be the case; and we made inquiries of them why they lived so far apart. But in reply we heard only the same reasons that are often given in very different countries, for the conservation of usages that ought long since to have been abolished, that such was the custom of their fathers.

Attached to all the houses that we passed by, after crossing the last hills, there were larger portions of

pasture-ground than we had before seen; and the grass, though of a coarse description, was here growing most luxuriantly. By the stream, the abundance of the wild productions of the several kinds with which we were familiar, still more surprised us. The rose bushes, which were every where in great plenty, were in some instances from six to nine feet in height. Early in the day, we crossed several times a stream of a chalky colour; and we observed that, wherever the stones broke its smooth course, appeared a foam like soap-suds, which covered the surface of the water as far down as the eye could reach.

Before noon, we arrived at the bank of the main stream of the Ochota, the entire waters of which were of the same colour as those of the streams just mentioned. It was necessary for us to cross the river at this point, on account of the country on its right bank abounding in the same morasses and swamps from which we had suffered so much during the earlier stages of our journey, although it would be soon equally necessary to recross it to avoid the same obstructions upon the opposite side, and afterwards even to cross it for a third time, before arriving at the termination of the journey.

We found a hut here inhabited by one of the natives, who was living quite alone, and who had no cattle whatever, and was almost in a starving state, with a pack of dogs that were as nearly as possible reduced to skeletons. And this, too, was by the side of a river that had probably more salmon in it at this very time, as it will be afterwards shown, than any river in the world has of any fish at any season. But the Yakoute had neither nets, nor hooks and lines, and obtained only such fish as the current threw on shore. How he lived through the winter we could not learn from him; and his appearance and the reception he

We encountered here some difficulty and some detention, on account of the state of the river. The Ochota is subject to sudden swellings, arising from two very different causes, and which are not on that account to be foreseen. If the rains are heavy on the higher lands, the river swells with rapidity; and if the sky is without a cloud, the same effect is produced by the melting of the snow and the ice in the elevated valleys from which the sources of the river proceed. Thus, the water will rise to a great height, and fall again, sometimes twice in the course of the twenty-four hours. But the season of the full influence of these causes and effects is but of short duration; for with the first night-frosts, which usually take place in the middle of August, the condensed mists which hang over the mountains fall in snow, and the glaciers cease to melt, when the river becomes low, and its breadth equal, save for about four of the twenty-four hours, during which the waters still rapidly rise and fall, from the effects of the mid-day sun upon the snow and ice in the less elevated lands. The breadth, generally, of the Ochota at this pass is less than a verst; but it was at this time more than two versts, and the current was running with such rapidity that the horses could not be put into the stream without great risk of losing them.

After three or four hours' detention, however, the river rapidly fell, and the current was so much diminished in force, that we crossed very easily in the half-starved Yakoute's little canoe, and swam our horses without much difficulty or risk.

Soon after passing the main stream of this principal river, which falls into the Ochotsk Sea, we crossed several torrents of the kind to which we were well customed. The soil and the vegetation which

after passing the Ochota, were the same as those wi have been last mentioned. Here, however, we marked that the most venerable of all the trees w the birches. The larch was equal in size to any s found upon the western coast of the continent America in the latitudes between 47 and 50 degrees.

As we proceeded, the stony streams continued obstruct our progress, and the waters in them w now increased in breadth and strength. About tw hours before the time at which we usually encamp we came to the second pass of the Ochota, where w found the river divided into two channels. Here the was neither native nor canoe; and it was necessary tha we should find a ford over which we might pass wit our horses. But before we discovered a favourable place for wading, we met two of the natives mounted who, though they pointed out to us a ford, informed us at the same time, that one of them in crossing had been swept into the broad waters where the channels unite, and had with difficulty saved his horse. Partly, therefore, to avoid the risk of losing ours, and partly on account of the sickness of one of our men, from which he was suffering much, we determined upon encamping here for the night, in the hope of there being some diminution of the flood, and that our sick man would be better the next day. Thus, after marking the line to which the water now reached, that we might know in the morning how much it had risen or fallen, we pitched our tent.

The complaint of the Yakoute was very similar to that by which the captain of our boat upon the *Léna* had been attacked, and is supposed by the natives to be peculiar to the country. It manifests itself in a swollen throat and tongue, which, when exaggerated, prevents respiration. This man's tongue was so swollen that he was unable to speak; but it appeared to me that he

but very little fever: his disease was probably the uenza.

The immediate spot which we had found the most ivenient for our encampment, was about twenty paces om the high bank of the torrent, and was a perfect d of flowers, composed of the several kinds which ve been before mentioned as abounding in this plain. proved, however, to my companions and myself more ke a bed of thorns; for we had very little rest, wing to the more than ordinary alarm of our horses, n account of their ferocious enemies of the forest, both before and after they were tethered to feed. We had been so often, as we thought, disturbed without reason, that we had grown indifferent to the claims of our beasts to our care. Neither was it very prudent to be hunting for bears amid the dense beds of underwood and shrubs and flowers that surrounded us, even with any weapon whatever; for that savage animal is not without a portion of the attribute in which the fox has the credit of excelling all the beasts of the forest, and must be cautiously dealt with, whatever may be the weapon by which he is to be encountered. Our Yakoutes upon this occasion, however, were doubly careful in regard to the security of the camp; and after the horses had once or twice disturbed them, they lighted fresh fires among the underwood on all sides.

In the morning we were the first stirring; and when we came out of our tent, we found all the Yakoutes sleeping. They were very snugly rolled up in their accustomed wrappings, and the fresh flames of the fires were burning around them. As soon as we had aroused them, our first business was to descend the bank of the river near which we had pitched our tent, in order to discover how much the water had risen or fallen. But we no sooner reached the beach, than our attention was attracted by marks upon the muddy ground, by

which we found that a bear of no mean stature had been here promenading while we were asleep; and that by our unpardonable indifference to our horses plaints, which were no doubt on account of the too near approach of this very animal, we had lost the best chance that could have occurred of a satisfactory shot.

When we came to examine the height of the water, we found it to be about six inches less than it had been when we arrived; and as the current must have proportionably diminished in rapidity, we now determined to attempt the passage. It was the strength of the current, indeed, rather than the depth of the water, that was at all times to be regarded. Thus, after making our preparations at perfect leisure, we traced the shore of the principal of the channels somewhat higher up than the spot at which the Yakoutes that we had met upon the previous evening, had crossed; and when we thought we had found a convenient place, we plunged into the midst of the current, and soon gained the opposite shore, without experiencing any other inconvenience than such as we were too well accustomed to to regard.

After passing this river, we found the plain at every verst less and less fertile. Of flowers there were now none; and of shrubs, save the stunted scrubby spruces, we had very soon scarcely the merest bush to vary the monotonous prospect; and for the torrents that had so much embarrassed us for so large a portion of our journey we had now nothing but sluggish streams, slowly wending their way through a morass in which there were occasional ponds, that were the resort of the curlew, the plover, and the snipe, which were every where in great abundance.

At length, upon the seventh day of July, after a journey of twenty-four days, of which the chief incidents have been recorded, and after a last trot across a barren

ersts of its mouth, and immediately opposite the good town of Ochotsk, that had been so long in our thoughts by day, if not by night also, as the happy place of our repose.

The breadth of the river is here about two versts and a half. From where we now stood, we had a peep at the sea through a narrow break in the sand hills which form the coast, and through which the waters of the river find a passage to the sea. The town appeared to consist merely of a small collection of black huts; but this dull picture of our so long wished for place of repose was a little relieved by the view of a brig lying near the mouth of the river.

There was no canoe upon the banks of the Ochota where we arrived; but the firing of guns and the lighting of fires soon brought us aid; and we now took leave of the last of the noble race of animals that had served us so faithfully, and of the last of our additional guides, who returned with his beasts freed from their burdens; and before the close of the day we were snugly housed in a Yakoute hut at Ochotsk.

I shall here further add only this remark, that the obstructions and difficulties which we met with upon this journey were greater than those which I had encountered upon any previous occasion; and that this was the first journey I ever made, where the accounts given by those to whom the road ought to have been known, of the difficulties and dangers to be encountered, have not proved to have been greatly exaggerated.

We were now upon the coasts of the Ochotsk Sea in the Pacific Ocean; and our distances by the measurement of the Russian government were from Yakoutsk, 1045 versts; from Irkoutsk, 3774 versts; and from Moscow, 8883 versts, or about 6650 miles.

The following words of the Yakoute language a taken from a vocabulary we made at Yakoutsk, a which we used in all our communications with a guides and the natives during our journey across t part of the country.

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | Sittee. |
| No | Socht. |
| Well | Outchigey. |
| Bad | Thoosahane. |
| **Numbers.** | |
| 1 | Bare. |
| 2 | Akee. |
| 3 | Oose. |
| 4 | Terte. |
| 5 | Baiss. |
| 6 | Alta. |
| 7 | Sett. |
| 8 | Agaouss. |
| 9 | Togouss. |
| 10 | Owne. |
| 11 | Onordoubis. |
| 12 | Okorduchi. |
| 20 | Surbia. |
| Bread | Astobitt. |
| Water | On. |
| Beef | Augauss. |
| Horse | Att. |
| Road | Coll. |
| The good Spirit | Targarra. |
| The evil Spirit | Arbassi. |
| Man | Kissi. |
| Woman | Jaiktorr. |
| Bear | Assay. |
| Wolf | Barray. |
| Forest | Tay. |
| Tree | Marss. |
| River | Aeurruss. |
| Mountain | Hatch. |
| Lake | Kaille. |
| Rain | Samirr. |
| Sun | Kune. |
| Moon | Eyi. |
| To eat | Assirr. |
| House | Dea. |
| Bow | Okolôsse. |
| Gun | Ourraressr. |
| How much | Tasanug. |
| Nothing | Togtossoh. |
| Much | Elbiah. |
| Little | Otchangong |
| Grand | Oulahan. |
| Marsh | Oukarr. |
| Duck | Sassēke. |
| Stone | Tarse. |
| Goose | Harse. |
| Snow | Harr. |
| Ice | Bousse. |
| Enough | Tucksee. |
| Quick | Tourganik |
| Slowly | Bitakik. |
| Always | Millgi. |
| Often | Soubou. |
| Hat | Itti. |
| Cold | Timpi. |
| Dry | Kourrassch. |
| Wet | Sikhiah. |
| Now | Sibilijik. |
| Late | Houtt. |
| Early | Aerday. |
| Again | Horroom. |
| Not yet | Akike. |
| White | Ourrauua. |
| Black | Harra. |
| Red | Kalille. |
| Gold | Partchi. |

## CHAP. XXV.

### OCHOTSK.

Position of Ochotsk.—A naval Port.—Population.—Aspect of the Town.—Buildings.—Importance of Ochotsk.—Commerce.—Unhealthiness.—Means of Subsistence of the Inhabitants.—Character of the Climate.—Visit to the Commandant.—Society at the Government-house.—Preliminaries to a Marriage.—Eve of the Marriage.—Gaieties.—A Novelty.—Distinguishing the Age of Womanhood.—Usages of different Nations.—Remarkable Ceremony.—Various Symbols.—Benediction.—Admonition.—Preparation for the Church Ceremonies.—Exchange of Rings.—Whimsical Incident.—Russian Manner of regarding it.—*Fête* of the Commandant's Wife.—Sailors' Present.—First Appearance of a Cadet in Uniform.

THE town of Ochotsk lies in latitude 59° 15′ N. and longitude 143° 10′ E., and is situated a little eastward of the point at which the coast deviates from the north-east and south-west direction, in which it stretches for several degrees further southwards, and now lies nearly due east and west, by which the country is laid open to the full effects of the south winds. It is a naval port, and has both an arsenal and shipyard, and a naval school. Its population consists of the officials, comprising the commandant, who is always a captain in the navy, and usually of the first grade, five or six other officers, and about 300 seamen, with several officers in the civil service of the government, and a few merchants. The little town stands at about a verst from the entrance of the harbour, upon the inner side of a long peninsula or neck of land, formed entirely of shingles, on one side of which is the sea, and on the other the River Ochota. Its buildings consist of about 150 log-

houses and huts, a government-house, a barrack, church, and a hospital, besides those of the arsenal and shipyard, which are placed a little below the rest of the town.

Nothing can be more desolate and wretched than the aspect of this remote town and the country that surrounds it; though to our eyes, after our arduous journey, its meanest hut was most grateful and refreshing. Upon the occasion of our first walk among the buildings, we observed that they were not placed without some of that regard to order which distinguishes all the Russian towns and villages. There was even, notwithstanding its inconsiderable commerce, a double row of buildings containing a few shops, and though very badly supplied with merely a few articles for domestic uses, yet representing the *gostinnoi dvor*. The barrack was of two stories, but was fast falling to decay. The hospital was better. But the church is the most lone and wretched imaginable. It stands apart from the houses upon a little elevation of the shingles, and has a burial ground attached to it, the rails of which were, however, fallen down for want of solid earth to support them. Moreover, we heard afterwards, that it was impossible to place the remains of the dead out of reach of the wolves, by which they were continually raked from the shingles amidst which they were laid.

The importance, as well as the support, of the town of Ochotsk, are derived from its character of a naval depôt, and from its being the channel of intercourse between Kamtschatka and the interior of the country. Formerly, it enjoyed also advantages arising from its being the port of the Russo-American Company, which has been removed to Ayan. Two vessels have been built in its shipyard; but neither of which is fit to navigate the seas of these high latitudes.

is coast in these latitudes, and from the sterile aracter of the country which borders the coast, but ove all from its extreme unhealthiness. These drawacks, indeed, to its progress are so great, that were it ot for the salmon with which the Ochota abounds, the xpense of the maintenance of the town would be far reater than any benefits which it returns.

The unhealthiness of Ochotsk is more the effect of he position of the town with respect to the sea and he surrounding country, than of its latitude and longitude. Placed between the ocean, and lands which in summer are heated by so many hours of sunshine, it is exposed during the best months of the year to almost perpetual cold and damp winds from the sea; while in the spring it is subjected to the effects of an impure air, proceeding from animal matter in a state of decomposition, which covers the morass along the opposite shores of the river. Here, great quantities of salmon take shelter in the autumn, and are frozen, and lie embedded during the winter; and when the sun melts the ice in the spring, the swamps are found covered with the pestiferous animal matter. Thus the little settlement, as often as the wind is off shore, is exposed to all the effects of the malaria; and fevers and diarrhœa now prevail. The causes, indeed, of the pestilence are not of long continuance; for as the rivers begin to swell, by the melting of the snow at their sources, the morasses which border them are cleared of the intolerable nuisance. But scarcely, however, does this take place, before the town is subjected to the winds, almost as destructive to health as the pestilential atmosphere from which it has been so lately relieved.

It is said by the inhabitants, that Ochotsk, so unblessed by nature, wants, in effect, three out of the

four elements which compose the material world support life elsewhere. Their houses, they say, built upon loose shingles, amidst which their d sleep; and thus they must needs want the pr element that composes the earth. For their wa they say, that in summer they have to send ten twelve miles up the current of the river, which flows a brackish stream by their doors. And when the st of the ice in spring and autumn prevents their doing, and the snow which they melt in winter is gon they have to drink of a single impure spring, fro which flows all the water they possess. And their ai the element denied to no living creatures that walk th earth, is at one season rendered insufferable by th causes above mentioned, and at another loaded wit drift snow, and at a third a mere blast from the ocean, almost as inimical to life as the malaria with which it is loaded in the spring. Fire, they say, alone of the four elements comforts them.

This picture, which the people of Ochotsk draw of their own sad condition, is but little exaggerated. From sixty to sixty-five, out of about 300 sailors, were sick in the hospital the whole time of my stay here, and nearly the same proportion of the constant inhabitants of the town were suffering from complaints incident to the climate. The Russian government does much to repay the officers for the inconveniences to which they are exposed at this remote station; but they cannot do too much for men subjected to so many trials of patience in so bad a climate, for the interest and advantage of their country. Their term of service is usually five years, during which they receive double pay, with a certainty of promotion at the expiration of the term.

On the morning after our arrival at Ochotsk, I sent a letter, with which I had been furnished by the

ernor-general Mouravief, to the commandant, Captain alalarski of the imperial navy, and I soon afterds called at the government-house. I found the mmandant of this distant outpost of the empire in chief apartment of his dwelling, which was a neat d humble building, very suitable to the character of e place of his command; and I met a polite and arty reception. The gallant officer was very curious oncerning the country between the seat of his governent and the more populous districts in the interior of Siberia, none of which he had seen. His road to Ochotsk, as well as that of all the officers and *chinovnik* that were under his command, had been upon his own element, round the great continent which comprises the three old quarters of the globe; and it had been a very long one, on account of their ship, though she was built in England, being one of the worst sailers that ever floated upon the ocean, which had caused them, indeed, to be about eighteen months on the voyage.

When a few other ordinary matters had been disposed of, I commenced my inquiries concerning the projects I entertained of continuing my travels as far as the peninsula of Kamtschatka; and I now learned from the commandant, that the ship which it has been already mentioned, passes annually between Ochotsk and the great peninsula, was expected to arrive here in about a fortnight, and that she would sail again to return to Kamtschatka after a very few days' delay. The commandant also informed me that, in the meantime apartments would be provided for my residence in the officers' barracks, and that, on the ship's arrival, every accommodation would be afforded me for undertaking the voyage. Before I retired, the commandant requested that I would dine with him the same day, that he might have an opportunity of introducing me to his family, and also to the officers with whom he was about to domicile me.

Upon coming to the government-house at the appointed hour, I had the pleasure of meeting Gospoja Voulalarski, as well as several of the officers of the port. The lady was quite the wife of a sailor, full of kindness and affability; and she seemed almost as much at home here, as if she had been native born, and unacquainted with more favoured portions of the globe. Since their arrival, too, she had given birth to five fine children.

Among the gentlemen present, were Captain Poplonsky, an officer who had lately explored a part of the south coast of the Ochotsk Sea, before unknown to navigators, and very little known to geographers, who have almost entirely depended upon the reports of the natives in the interior of the Manchur country. There was also Gospodin Yakovenko, *ispravnik* or judge of the province, and Gospodin Malinari, naval architect and surveyor, and an officer of engineers from one of the German provinces of the empire.

The dinner was purely Russian, plentiful as far as the table was concerned when the climate is allowed for, without being deficient in the ceremonies which the inequality of ranks among the guests in regard to one another, and their relations to the host upon such occasions, naturally engender. There was, nevertheless, a touch of that warmth of feeling and friendship among all parties, which will appear whenever a few individuals of similar pursuits or breeding are separated from the rest of the social family to which they belong.

The day after this dinner at the governor's, I took up my quarters at the officer's barracks, where ample rooms were assigned to me, with a couple of sailors for domestics. I was rather fortunate in respect to the time of my arrival here, as far as regarded the spare amusements which the members of the little society of the place are able to enjoy. Gospodin Malinari, above

mentioned, had had the good fortune to find a young lady of Russian descent upon the male side, attractive enough to determine him to fulfil the natural as well as the scriptural law, which commands us to increase and multiply, and the celebration of the marriage took place a few days after my arrival.

Among the Russians, the union of a young couple is at all times an affair of interest to a wider circle of the relations and friends of the parties, than the same event is with us, and of course this marriage was a cause of joy to the whole of the inhabitants of Ochotsk. The pure Russian blood is estimated in this part of Siberia in about the same degree that probably the Roman was estimated in our island when Agricola taught our progenitors, of one at least of the several races from which we trace our origin, that rational amusements and enjoyments contribute to cheerfulness, and that cheerfulness tends to produce that disposition of the mind which is most favourable to the advance of knowledge, and of all the refinements in which civilisation consists; and just in the same manner the Russians, as far as opportunities favour them, follow this wise as well as humane course for the improvement of the dull races they have subdued, and certainly with every prospect of arriving at the same results in Siberia that the Romans happily attained in Britain.

The day before the marriage, the papa of the young lady, who was the *otcoopstchik* of the department, gave a suitable entertainment, at which all the officers and *chinovnik* of the place were present; and I had the pleasure of being a partaker in the amusements of the evening. The good folks of Ochotsk enjoyed themselves upon this occasion much in the same manner that a party of mixed ages are wont to do among ourselves. Some danced, some conversed, and some did nothing. There was, nevertheless, at least one

novelty, but which was not necessarily connected with the immediate cause of the entertainment. This was the appearance of a younger sister of the bride, who had been dressed until this day in quite child's clothes, but now appeared in very marked woman's attire. I believe among all nations, ancient and modern, that have or have had any manners at all, it is and has been the custom to distinguish the period of life that we look so anxiously for during our under age by some ceremony, or by some change in our relations by law to the community to which we belong.

It was not permitted by Augustus that girls should marry before they had attained their twelfth year. Marriages at nine and ten on the side of the girl are very frequent in Eastern countries. Whether climate or race be the cause of the difference, certainly our species are much more precocious in some countries than in others; and perhaps in all countries the period fixed for manhood and womanhood, or, more properly speaking, the period at which the matrimonial alliance should be permitted, ought to be determined by laws framed in accordance with Nature's more hasty or more tardy performance of her good work. This period is not determined in law in Russia any more than in most other countries. But custom among the people in this part of the empire has established the age of seventeen for the full-grown period of the woman; and the moment is made manifest to the world by an immediate and very marked change of dress; and on this occasion the child of yesterday appeared set off to the best advantage in full woman's attire. But certainly, if this instance were a fair one, the conventional law has here by some years anticipated Nature; for the appearance of the young lady was that of a child that had put on her mother's gown, or that of a badly dressed doll. I made now this discovery, how-

ever, that I must, upon several previous occasions, have spoken to girls that were at any rate just bordering upon womanhood precisely as we address mere children. I am disposed to think, that a girl of twelve years of age in Egypt, and a girl of seventeen in this part of Siberia, are in general as nearly as possible equal, as well in regard to the material as to the immaterial portion of our two-fold nature; but I do not think that the duration of the full bloom of the one is longer than that of the other.

The first act of the ceremonies, as they were practised on this occasion, was one of ancient usage among the Russians, but which is not now practised in Russia Proper, or at least not in the great cities of the empire. When the celebration of the marriage is determined upon, a married couple, not being very young, are selected by agreement among the parties to perform the little offices which belong naturally to the parents on both sides; and in the present instance the gallant commandant and his lady played this important part, which was as novel to a stranger in the manner of its performance, as the appearance of the parties in this character was novel in the ceremonies. Upon the day selected for the celebration of the marriage, the substituted parents gave a grand entertainment, which commenced with a dinner, at which, in addition to the best viands of the country (which cannot indeed be much praised), were served the preserved meats and fruits and the choicest wines of Western Europe. But the young couple in whose honour all were assembled, were not yet present. Soon after we rose from the table, however, a herald formally proclaimed the approach of the bride and the bridegroom; upon which, the substituted parents took possession of the upper end of another room, which was to be that where the first portion of the ceremony of the marriage was to be performed.

The young couple now entered the dining-room, the guests of the commandant stood back, to admit their advance towards the inner room. The bride prettily dressed in the chastest white, and the young officer was in military attire. Having passed through this room, they entered that appointed for the first part of the ceremony, followed by all the governor's guests who remained at the lower end of the room, as spectators of the scene. The parties on whom all eyes were bent, now advanced towards the elder couple, who were standing to receive them, but with the slow and solemn step which a due respect to the representatives of the parents on both sides appeared to demand: and the little ceremony which followed was the more interesting, from its being a relic of the customs of the Russians of the more purely patriarchal age. The substituted parents bore in their hands typical signs at once of our relations with heaven and of our necessities upon earth. The father held with both hands before him the picture which was designed to furnish the holy corner of the sleeping-room of the happy couple, and the mother laid her left hand upon a loaf of bread, that had, on account of its immense size, been placed upon a small table by her side instead of in her hands. When the young couple stood in front of the elder, the bridegroom informed the substituted parents that he was about to accomplish the marriage, for which he had already obtained their permission, with the lady who was by his side; and that he now came, accompanied by his bride, to ask the blessing of their united parents before the celebration of the more important of the ceremonies of their final union. Upon this the substituted father made a sign to them in silence to kneel; and as soon as the young couple were on their knees, he made the sign of the cross with the picture over the head of the bridegroom, and then placed the little holy symbol to his

n breast. At the same time, the substituted mother, th her left hand still upon the bread, made the sign the cross with the right hand over the head of the ide. As soon as these signs were made, the bride-oom bowed his head to the ground, and touched the oor three times with his forehead, while the bride emained kneeling. Then they both rose upon their eet; and after having kissed the little picture which vas extended to them severally, they twice again re-peated together the same genuflexions as before, and he bridegroom the same bowings to the ground, and the parents the same symbolic signs by which the bless-ing is conveyed.

The benediction being complete, the picture was presented by the substituted father to the bridegroom, and the bread, though not removed from the table, was presented by the substituted mother to the bride, the former as an appropriate memorial of the event, and the latter as symbolic of worldly prosperity. The presentation was accompanied also by a few words of solemn admonition, pronounced by the substituted parents separately, and which were translated to me as follows: — "So long," said the father, as he presented the picture, "as you both can look without shame upon this holy emblem, which will sanctify your chamber, your sleep will be tranquil, and your days will be happy." "Then," said the mother, "while you are virtuous, neither yourselves nor your children will want the fruits of the earth, typified in this loaf."

At this moment two stout sailors, that had been placed in some corner unseen, advanced and took up the enormous loaf, and bore it to the future home of the young couple, who now retired accompanied by their substituted parents, to proceed together to the house of the true parents of the bride.

Shortly after this, the rest of the commandant's

guests took the same road. When we entered the apartment in which all parties were assembled, we found the relatives of the bride and all who were most interested in the union, seated at the upper side of the room. We took our seats upon benches that had been placed around; and in a very few minutes after the ceremony of quite another kind to that last mentioned commenced, by way of preparation for the solemnities of the church, consisting in large doses of champagne accompanied with appropriate toasts.

From the father of the bride's house, late in the evening, we all set off together on foot for the church: for there is no description of carriages in use in summer at Ochotsk, except a few *talashari*, or small carriages for the dogs to draw water from the boats by which it is brought down the river, or from the brackish springs above mentioned, to the houses.

This part of the ceremony of the marriage was commenced by an exchange of rings between the future husband and wife, each party, according to the Russian custom, presenting a ring to the other. This ceremony, however, is performed in Russia Proper some days previous to that of the celebration of the marriage. On this occasion, the officiating pope carried these symbols of the sacred contract within the *ikonostass;* and after having there, unseen by the company, by some rite of the church, infused them with all necessary virtue, he returned them to the parties, who now made the exchange. The rest of the ceremony was the same as that of the marriages in the Russian and Greek Churches in Europe.

A whimsical incident occurred during the performance of the ceremonies, which a little relieved the weariness inseparable from an attendance at a Russian marriage, on account of the great length of the offices which the priests perform.

ch the crowns, which are used in the ceremonies, intly pressing their heads, and with their eyes fixed on the pope, who was reading, and when, doubtless, other eyes were set with admiration or curiosity upon the bride and some maidens of mingled blood by her side, we were all startled by a smash within the sanctuary, that would have awakened a bear from his December slumber. Every eye was now turned towards the holy place, the whole vicinity of which was well hung with lamps and candles, and presented a kind of fairy show; but the cause of the alarm was concealed from our view. The officiating pope, as he stood and looked with apparent astonishment upon the screen which concealed the *ikonostass*, seemed to hesitate whether to throw down his book, and fly to the scene of mischief, or to preserve the dignity proper to the time, and continue his sacred duties. Nor did any of his several assistants move from the spot, on which they seemed to stand entranced. But while all eyes remained bent in the same direction, a little boy in naval uniform, with cocked hat and sword, presented himself from within at the door of the sanctuary, as if another bottle like that which imprisoned the *diable boiteux* had fallen, and given liberty to some spirit in the form of a general of Lilliput. It would have been impossible for the droll apparition to fail to set a party of stoics in a roar, and it was not therefore wonderful, that none of our party, from the pope to the sailors in the back-ground, were able to maintain their gravity on the occasion. The Lilliputian hero turned out to be the son of the commandant, at the time playing so different a part. Finding what was passing in the open church rather too wearisome for his temperament, he had entered the holy of holies, when all the attention of the company was occupied by the ceremonies

that were performing, and had accidentally committed some mischief that produced the alarm, but which, however, turned out to be of not much more importance in point of cost than the smash of the bottle that set at liberty the prying *diable boiteux*. And what might have been sacrilege among a less sensible people than the Russians, and deemed worthy of excommunication in the church whose priests separate themselves from the rest of the world, and remain unacquainted with the true feelings of humanity, was by the intelligent and good family pope of Ochotsk, looked upon just as a wise parent regards a piece of mischief practised by a spirited boy.

Besides the gaieties which were incident to the Ochotsk marriage, one or two *fête* days of some of the good folks of the place occurred during my stay here; and among these was that of the wife of the commandant. It was celebrated in the same manner that the Russians are wont every where to keep this sacred epoch of their particular history; yet two little incidents of the evening were adapted to attract the special notice of a stranger. While the dance, cards, and chess, were going merrily on, a gentle tap was heard at the door of the room in which the young folks were dancing; and presently in marched four seamen, staggering under the weight of a cake of enormous bulk, made of white flour, and which they brought to present to the lady on the part of the whole of the seamen of the port, as an acknowledgment of their gratitude for her interference in behalf of several of them, both at sea and on shore, by which they had obtained pardon for offences and escaped the floggings which the strict discipline of the service had seemed to demand.

The other incident will tend to show that the means of advancement, both in the Russian service and in the

ɔt confined to those whose fortunes have placed
ı in the more populous and richer towns and
icts of the empire. It was the presence of a cadet
ıe school above mentioned, who was a son of one of
ordinary seamen of the port, and was that day
anced to the rank of an officer in the imperial navy.
was a fine youth, and of course in uniform, and I
ɜ informed that several other seamen of the port had
ıs among the cadets, who were in the same way of
vancement.

## CHAP. XXVI.

### OCHOTSK — *continued.*

A remarkable Disease. — Soirée. — Case of an afflicted Persa Experiments. — Contradiction in the Symptoms. — Further E periments. — Extraordinary Results. — Other Cases related Conjectures concerning the Origin of the Disease. — Arrival the Annual Ship from Kamtschatka. — Amusements. — Salm fishing. — Shooting. — Tea Pavilion. — Nationalities. — Russ Officers not great Students of international Relations. — Th Impressions of the Character of our Enterprises. — Capt Poplonsky's Discoveries. — Winter Amusements. — Captain Ra dakoff and his Ship. — Difficulty of leaving the Harbour. — E Adaptation of the Ship to the Port. — Unexpected Incide in our Favour. — Last Hour at the Commandant's. — Fello travellers. — Beach Adieus. — Embarkation. — Departure.

A REMARK has been made in a previous chapter, concerning a disease which is peculiar to this part of the country, and to which it was conjectured, at the same time, the apparent feature in the character of the Yakoutes, which is generally supposed by the Russians to be want of courage, might more justly be attributed. I was but a very few days at Ochotsk before I had the opportunity of witnessing some decided cases of this disease; and I shall report all that I was able to observe in two of these instances in particular, just as the facts present themselves to those who have no knowledge of the medical art.

The disease is called, in the language of the natives, *mereyachtchit;* but the Russians merely term it the Yakoute disease. The first of the afflicted persons whom I saw was a native lady, the wife of a merchant of this place. This was not a bad case; but, as the

mstance in the only account of the complaint h it is in my power to give, it will be first mened.

: was a thorough time of merry-making at Ochotsk, account chiefly of the marriage above mentioned; the *soirées* and suppers were nightly, and the ngers in the place were never forgotten. On my iving one evening at the door of a house of rejoicing, the company of one of the officers before mentioned, ptain Poplonsky, who had preceded us, and with om I had previously had some conversation concerng the disease, came out to say that the lady above luded to was among the guests within, and that he ished me to follow in his "wake," and close to him, n order that he might give me the opportunity, by uddenly introducing me to her, when I had not been previously seen, of witnessing some of the curious effects of the disease. The lady, he informed me, knew very well that there were strangers in the place, and, upon hearing that I was to be one of the guests of the evening, she had become very uneasy, and wished to retire, but had not been allowed so to do. I confess, when I heard this, and remembered what had been related to me concerning the disease, I feared that I should be a general disturber of the harmony of the evening; and I, therefore, begged I might be rather allowed to return to my quarters, contented with what I had heard, until a better opportunity might occur for observing the effects of the disease. But this was as peremptorily opposed as the request of the lady had been; and I therefore followed the captain, by whom I was closely covered. The lady, nevertheless, easily perceived the attempted deception; and, in considering the effects of the introduction that followed, it is necessary to remember this. When we stopped in

front of her, the captain bowed politely, and, after a or two words of course, suddenly started on one si and, in a tolerably loud and rough manner, at the sa instant, uttered some interjectional phrase equivale to, "Behold!" In an instant, the lady was absolutel deprived of her senses; and, with a countenance whic exhibited, as it appeared to me, at the same time, th passion of terror and the expression of laughter, sh fixed her eyes on me for a few minutes, but neither sai nor did anything. This produced, strange as it wil appear, until all has been said of the disease that this case and the others to be mentioned suggest, a hearty laugh through the whole room. Upon this, the reason of the lady seemed gradually to return; and her countenance now expressed neither sorrow nor anger at what had passed, but rather perfect good-humour and simplicity, with smiles, almost like those of approbation. But it will appear doubly strange that this lady was subjected several times during the evening to the same treatment, which had always the same effect.

The next instance of the disease which I had occasion to witness, was a much more confirmed case. The afflicted person was a man of the mingled blood, and was a ship-carpenter in the service of the government. I was led by the commandant and the captain to the spot where the man happened to be working in company with several other men; and I was told by my conductors, on our way, that I was about to see the disease in its full vigour, and a case in which the means taken to exhibit it would not only deprive the sufferer of his reason, but reduce him to such a state of subjection as to allow of his being made to perform any act whatever that he was told to do by the party that terrified him, however unlawful or absurd it might be.

When we came to the place where the men were working, the commandant called to the sick man, who

as engaged in his ordinary labour among the rest, to proach him, just as if he had merely some instructions to give about the work in hand. The man came om among the rest, and stood in front of us, without eming to take any notice of the presence of a stranger, hich at least seemed to prove that the terror of foeigners that appeared to have had so strange an effect pon the afflicted lady, even before I came into the oom, was not a symptom of the disorder. But while he commandant was conversing with this man, the aptain suddenly started as he had done in the case of the lady, and bawled out again some interjectional phrase. At this, the man started also, and called out the same or similar words to those used by the captain, and then stood and stared like a madman arrested by his chains. Before, however, the afflicted man had been a minute in this condition, the captain roughly commanded him to beat the commandant, which the man now commenced doing immediately. But the commandant, being on his guard, had scarcely received a blow, and which was luckily not such as a John Bull might have given under similar circumstances, before he started also, and shouted at the same time, and, by a fresh command, set the affrighted man to beat the captain, who, by frightening him again in the same manner, left him stupified and standing inactive. He did not remain, however, in this condition for a longer space of time than about a minute, when, being no further tormented, his senses returned, and he smiled as good-naturedly as if he felt rather satisfaction than anger at the condescension of his officers.

Of the many other cases of this malady that I saw, the effects were always the same. But what most of all surprised me, was the good-nature with which all the invalids bore the barbarous treatment which they appeared to receive. I saw even urchins treating men of

middle age just as the officers had served the penter, and without receiving any other rep than a very gentle check indeed, either from the nesses of the apparent outrage or from the inv themselves.

Many accounts, however, were related to me of effects of the complaint seen under other circumstan some of which were droll and some tragic. A wo afflicted was, while gathering wood, at the sight o plume of feathers upon the cap of an officer just arri at Ochotsk, seized with such a sudden frenzy as to "frighted out of fear:" and in this mood, in which "th dove will peck the estridge," she attacked the offic so violently that his gallantry was rather sorely tri on the occasion.

Two officers who had been some time here, upon th dropping of a stone before them, fell to beating each other, and did not recover their senses until after they had been pinioned by the sailors at the command of a superior officer.

In most cases, when the afflicted person is in the act of doing any thing unlawful or ridiculous at the command of another, he will immediately desist if so commanded by the same person; but when the immediate cause of the derangement of the intellect is accidental, the temporary madman is not so manageable. Several children had been killed since the time of the arrival of the officers that were now here, by their mothers *letting* them fall when they were suddenly alarmed.

Nothing seemed to be here known of the origin, or of the immediate causes, of this disease. It is said to have been prevalent among the natives at the time of the conquest of the country. The Russians, after a few years' residence, are as liable to it as the natives; and its effects upon both races are the same. This seems to indicate that it is at least an impartial endemic, origi-

ing most likely in the air and climate; which appears
ıfirmed by the fact that all who are afflicted recover
y shortly after leaving the country. Nevertheless, if
observations before made upon the strange contra-
ctions in the Yakoute character be recalled, this may
ıd to a doubt whether that very submission of this
ople to their conquerors which has converted them
l at once into a semi-civilised people, and the terror
civilised men of which an example has been
roduced, do not proceed from the prevalence of some
eeping portion of the disease in the very blood of the
ace. The name, indeed, which has been given to the
isease by the Russians, by whom it is called, as before
nentioned, the Yakoute disease, seems to indicate that
his has at some time been the prevailing opinion among
them. As for any such symptoms of the extraordi-
nary malady as might lead the physician to a proper
knowledge of it, I am only able to say that I found no
one that pretended to know more than might be judged
from similar effects to those which have been shown.
I heard it, indeed, described while I was here, by some
who had not been long in the country, as an affection of
the nerves. But unless it were said, at the same time,
what it is that affects the nerves, and in what manner
these delicate links between the material and immaterial
nature of which we appear to be composed are affected,
this seems a very unsatisfactory explanation of the
mystery.

Although the annual vessel from Kamtschatka had
been expected in a very few days when we arrived
upon the 6th of June at Ochotsk, she did not appear
before the 26th of July, having had a passage of forty
days, which was double that of the average of years;
and there was now no prospect of her being able to sail
again before three weeks or a month. After what has
been said of the climate and the scanty population of

Ochotsk, it need hardly be said that, in spite of occasional outbreak, such as that caused by the wedding which was simultaneous with our arrival, there was great want of means to relieve the tediousness of time to all those who had been accustomed to European society. The officers, however, have several sources of amusement which are suited to the seasons of summer and winter, without including cards and chess, at which the Russians play at all hours, and generally well. In summer, salmon-fishing and shooting occupy their leisure hours; and in these pursuits, which they now followed, I was able to join them. As to the fishing, however, the fish, indeed, were in far too great numbers to afford a lasting pleasure in catching them. I have already mentioned the quantity of salmon with which the rivers in this part of Siberia abound. Upon one occasion that I joined in the profitable sport, several of us together, with the use of a net, filled a canoe which carried about a hundred salmon of the ordinary size in three hours. During that time, however, we worked hard, and were very wet; and, moreover, on landing we learned, what was at least not calculated to stimulate further enterprise, that two of the servants of one of the officers of our party had filled two canoes in exactly the same time that we had taken to fill one. The same two men had, indeed, in four days caught 2000 fish; and it was not an uncommon thing for four men to catch 1000 in one single evening and night.

But the shooting at Ochotsk was quite another thing. Though the weather was continually bad, we were out almost daily upon the long banks of shingles and sand which reach for several versts upon both sides of the harbour, where the curlews and the plovers, though plentiful enough for good sport, were not so numerous or tame as to leave no motive for emulation. The

ınd, too, being formed in ridges which afforded ısional shelter, was very favourable for this sport; three or four of us together were ordinarily able ing the afternoon to bag thirty or forty brace or re of large curlews, without counting the smaller ecies and the plovers.

Several times we mounted the stream of the Ochota, ell prepared for the bears; but these animals are ther scarce within twenty versts of the coast, in conseuence of the greater paucity of their food here, more specially of the choicer kinds of which it consists, such s berries and cedar nuts. We shot, however, some lucks upon these occasions. But as we found them generally in ponds unconnected with the river, and as we lacked proper dogs, those of the country being worthless for our purpose, this sport was not very attractive.

Captain Poplonsky had built a little pavilion about a mile from the town, above the beach, where the officers sometimes met in the afternoon to take their accustomed tea; and I was generally with them during my stay at Ochotsk. We had one day carried the commandant's atlas with us to suggest subjects of discourse, and our conversation fell upon the power and extent of dominion of the different sovereigns of Europe; and I was led to speak in the strain not uncommon among us at home, remarking that the sun never set on the British dominions. Upon this being said, my friends began to glory in the same manner in their pride of dominion; and one of the party said, "Neither does the sun ever set upon the Russian empire. When it is noon in our mid-territory, he surveys the Czar's dominions in one unbroken mass, save at the Straits of Behring, as far as his beams can reach, both in the east and the west, and, he is drying up the dew in the early morn at Sitka, our capital in America, at the

same time that he is darting his evening ray against the gilded domes of St. Petersburg."

Another time, when the officers were regarding the vast proportion of the earth over which the Czar had absolute sway, they fell into exultation very natural in men of the profession of arms, but which, out of delicacy to the foreigner, they expressed in their own tongue. It happened, however, that my acquaintance with this, was quite sufficient to enable me to comprehend what was said, with the maps before us and the previous turn of the discourse for a guide; and I was much amused with their nationality, when I found them in imagination stretch out the line of their fleets of the Baltic and the Black Sea, until, compassing Europe, they met in the Atlantic Ocean, masters of the coasts at least of all the civilised world. What could be more harmless, more natural, or more loyal? Not willing that they should be taken by surprise and too soon awakened from their pleasing dream of universal dominion, I did not for the present attempt to deaden their exultation by any suggestions that would have been as natural on my part as their thoughts were on theirs. I took an early opportunity, however, of expressing my doubts of the possibility of the Russians carrying out any great enterprise before a reform took place in their manner of life, more especially in the excesses in which they indulged in the use of wine, *vodka*, and tobacco, which were gradually undermining the constitutions of the people, and subduing the mental and bodily energies of the nation.

I did not find the Russian officers whom I met in any part of the empire great students of the political or commercial relations of different countries to one another. My excellent friends here, thought that England only subsisted by such supplies from Russia as could not be procured elsewhere. They were, also,

er an impression, which is not uncommon in the at countries of Europe, as every one who has mingled ch with the people on the Continent cannot have led to observe, that all our national enterprises d international transactions were peculiarly selfish mpared with the more cosmopolitan acts of the rench.

Captain Poplonsky had been engaged for several ummers in surveying the coast of Siberia, but more specially that portion which lies between the port of Ochotsk and the coast of China; and he had discovered a new port two degrees south of Ayan in which ships might anchor in perfect safety in six fathoms water. But as no salmon, the great support of Ochotsk, was to be obtained there, and as the coast was more open to the drift-ice in spring than that of Ochotsk, it was not believed that this discovery would lead, as it was at first expected, to the removal of the present port. The captain had also discovered the mouth of some large river, not laid down in any map, and which he believed to be an outlet of the waters of the Amour, that had not been before known. It seems extraordinary that, at this day, this part of the coast of Asia should be almost unknown, and especially when we remember that we have so many ships, commanded by able navigators, in the Pacific Ocean.

I called one morning with one of my friends to visit Gospodin Samiloski Temopha Evanoff, a merchant of this place, who was reported to have a watch that was a great curiosity. We found the merchant at home, and he exhibited a watch marked Bayley & Son, London, with the figures 1424 in three places. It was very large and had a steel face, and was not unlike that shown formerly in Westminster Abbey for Oliver Cromwell's watch. The figures, it was not doubted,

indicated the date, yet it may be that they marked the number of the watch.

While I was at Ochotsk, a deputation arrived from a large party of the Tungouse tribe, who were encamped in this vicinity, to pay their *yasac* to the government in skins, which they brought with them. The similarity in feature and form between these people and some of the Indians upon the eastern coast of North America, between the latitudes of 45 and 50 degrees, has been already noticed. This was particularly remarkable at this place. The same form of face, the same colour of skin, the same lank hair. We endeavoured, while they were here, to carry on some kind of intercourse with them by the aid of the Yakoutes of the town, who knew a little of their language; but nothing could have been more unsatisfactory. We contrived, however, to get a few of their words, which I think were put down with tolerable accuracy. They will be found at the end of the chapter.

In winter, the sole out-door amusement of the Russians of Ochotsk is dog-sledging during the more temperate days that occur. The draught dogs of the coast should form a feature in any full account that might be given of the customs and manner of life of the inhabitants of this part of Siberia. They are, generally, a cross race between the savage animal of the interior of the country and the sledge-dog of Kamtschatka. But as enough has been said of the difference between the two races now naturalised in their several districts on the continent, and as an opportunity will occur to speak from experience both of the qualities and the use made of the parents of those of the coast in their native clime, all further remarks may be deferred until the narrative reaches the traveller's arrival in Kamtschatka.

The day after the ship arrived at Ochotsk, I had the

easure of meeting the captain, Domitti Rudakoff of e imperial navy, who commanded her, among the ual party of officers at dinner at the commandant's; d, after dinner, the whole party walked down to the ort, at the distance of about two versts from the town, inspect the forty days' storm-beaten "thing of life" nd most welcome visitor to every one at Ochotsk. Such, indeed, had been the weather upon the coast during the greater part of the time that we were expecting the ship, that much anxiety had been felt by the friends of the officers and seamen on board, who were all of this place, save the captain, who belonged properly to the fleet of the Black Sea; for they knew well the dangers attending the navigation of this rude coast and stormy sea. The apprehensions entertained, indeed, during a violent tempest which had occurred immediately before the ship's arrival, and which had damaged the buildings on shore and destroyed a garden that had been formed with incredible labour by placing mould upon the pebble-stones upon which the town stands, had induced the commandant to send exploring parties along the coast on both sides, in the hope of relieving any part of the crew that might have survived the shipwreck which the vessel could not have escaped had she been near the coast at the commencement of the tempest.

The good ship, that was a sight of so much joy to myself in particular, was called the Irtysch, after the great river of that name in Siberia. She was, nevertheless, an English north-country built vessel, and had been once an humble collier, though now arrived at the proud rank of a man-of-war and store-ship in the imperial service, carrying eight guns, and officered and manned like vessels of the same force in the Black Sea and the Baltic, and sailing without a rival in these seas.

There was not much to see on board the Irtysch;

and her crew were on shore for a day's relaxation after the fatigues of the voyage. The captain entertained us after the mode of his country. The brave collier was as much transformed below as upon deck. She had two cabins, the larger of which was before the smaller, and was that of the captain, while the smaller was appropriated to the rest of the officers and passengers in the government service. In the captain's cabin there were two state rooms, into one of which I was at once introduced, as that which was to be appropriated to my use, and at the same time hospitably invited by the captain to mess with him during the voyage.

On the 15th of August the Irtysch was ready to cross the bar. Leaving and entering the harbour of Ochotsk are equally difficult, on account of the shallow water upon the bar, which does not at full sea at spring tides exceed two fathoms; and as our vessel drew more than this, when laden, it was necessary she should take in a portion of her cargo in the open roads. But besides that it requires full sea to cross the bar, as the channel is narrow, it is equally necessary that the ship should have a leading wind, and, moreover, that there should not be much sea running at the time of the passage. Thus, so many things being necessary at the very same time, the passage of the bar in vessels even drawing no more than nine or ten feet of water may be considered half the trouble of a long voyage. It is much to be regretted, by all who are concerned in this dangerous and difficult navigation, that a vessel peculiarly adapted for the port and the voyage, possessing above all things two qualifications in which the collier man-of-war was wanting—a light draught of water, and quick sailing capability, was not sent to perform the duty of these seas.

The new moon was upon the 16th; but, the wind being foul and the weather bad, there was every reason

ever, upon the 21st, which was the last day that depth of water might be sufficient, that a sudden of wind came down from the mountains in the rior, just at the moment of high water; and our chful captain, being ready on board, took instant vantage of it, and cast off his holdings, and ran his p over the bar just at the time that every one had ade up his mind for another fortnight's delay at ast, and while some other intended passengers by his ip, as well as myself, were comfortably seated at inner at the commandant's. This was accomplished with no other accident than two or three thumps upon bar of loose stones, to which sort of usage the transmuted collier was no doubt well accustomed.

The next day an attempt was to have been made to despatch two lighters to the ship, now lying at anchor in the roads, to complete her cargo, and the passengers were to have taken this opportunity of embarking: but as there was found to be a very heavy surf running upon the bar, the attempt was abandoned; and as a strong wind directly on shore sprang up the same afternoon, and there was no shelter in the road, and the holding ground was bad, the vessel was obliged to get under weigh, and haul off the coast, to return when the weather might permit. Fortunately, however, the wind was the next day moderate, and in the afternoon our good ship hove in sight again, and preparations were immediately made for our embarkation.

The following day, at noon, the hour of departure was at hand, and there was a little party of the friendly inhabitants of Ochotsk assembled at the commandant's; and, while we were engaged over sparkling champagne, in expressing our hopes of one day again meeting, and in exchanging our good wishes, and in speculating concerning the issue of the voyage, the amiable lady of the

for their foreign guest, consisting of wines, spirits, sweetmeats, and preserved soups, which was kindly presented to me on our departure.

At the hour appointed for our embarkation, the whole population of the town, from the commandant downwards, moved in a mass along the beach to the point at which the boats and lighters were lying. We were to have two ladies of the party, one of whom was a sister of our chief pilot officer, or sailing master, Chudinoff, whose duty in the service upon this coast embraced also that of the first lieutenant in our ships; the other was the wife of a pope some time since employed in missionary labours among the unconverted Kamtschadales: and we had also an officer of artillery who had lately arrived from Russia by land. All the officers, with the exception of the captain, and all the sailors, and also the two ladies, belonged to the place. Thus, if the proportion, as it was stated to me, be correct, of one-third of the voyages attempted between this and Kamtschatka since the passage has been known having ended in shipwreck, our departure was very naturally an affair of great general interest.

Besides the passengers, half the crew were now to embark on board the lighters and the boats appointed to tow them; and I must confess that such a scene of embracing and kissing I never knew hallow any beach before. And if benedictions, "with tears watering the ground," could appease the winds and waves, before the raging of which poor mortals must cede, we thought, as we embarked, our voyage ought to be fortunate. My own feelings were a mixture of triumph at the attainment of this step in my travels, which had been of doubtful accomplishment even to the moment the Irtysch passed the bar, and of regret at quitting the society of the hospitable and worthy men with whom

ifidence and friendship.

The two lighters were to be towed by four boats, in e of which we embarked; and casting from the beach, now committed ourselves to the mercy of the current, er the effects of which oars have no control. We had uch difficulty in crossing the bar, upon which the sea as still breaking. Finally, however, with the use of the ars after we gained the open sea, we reached our ship ithout damage. The goods were soon hoisted in, and he shoremen that had aided the transport of the wares eft us, and our captain now looked only for the signal rom the commandant on shore, to weigh and depart.

The next morning at break of day the signal was flying which gave us permission to get under weigh. But although we could perceive by the flags that there was a good breeze on shore, there was not wind enough where we were, to counteract a current which continually sets to the westward upon this coast, and by which vessels, when exposed to its influence, are drawn into a position from which they cannot extricate themselves, in case of a strong wind arising in the same direction, and which was the quarter from which it generally blew at this season.

In the evening a light breeze sprang up from the southward, which was dead on shore. Our captain now perceived the necessity of taking the earliest opportunity of creeping off the coast, and immediately weighed, and putting the ship's head to the eastward made all sail possible. The breeze continued during the night; but the land was still in sight in the morning. By noon, however, upon the day after we weighed, the wind had hauled two points; and when the sun set the same day, the Siberian mountains were fast sinking beneath the horizon, and we were now at length fairly on our voyage.

## A FEW TUNGOUSE WORDS.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| The good Spirit | Choupky. | Sea | Narm. |
| The evil Spirit | Arinka. | Rain | Oran. |
| Man | Baia. | Dog | Niva. |
| Woman | Aschy. | Wigwam | Dechan. |
| Child | Koumakan. | Father | Aman. |
| Mountain | Ouriachtschaus. | Cloud | Oudan. |
| River | Achat. | Tree | Mo. |
| Wind | Chounga. | Snow | Smanda. |
| To-morrow | Admena. | Bow | Berkan. |
| Star | Agigate. | Canoe | Monis. |
| Sun | Nultine. | Knife | Tscherkan. |
| Moon | Btcha. | Squirrel | Ouliky. |
| Water | Mou. | Fox | Oulitschan. |

## CHAP. XXVII.

### VOYAGE FROM OCHOTSK TO KAMTSCHATKA.

Character of our Recollections of a Voyage.—Auspicious Omens.—A Whale.—Superstition of the Sailors.—Observation of the Movements of the Whale.—The Traveller's Mode of regarding similar Things.—Real Signs disregarded.—Our Captain's Humanity.—Other Omens.—A Novelty among Sea-fowl.—A fanatic Servant.—Traveller's Discomfort.—Contrast of Tolerance and Intolerance.—Traveller's Mode of acting among a tolerant People.—Restoration of Comfort and Order in the Cabin.—A Whaler in Sight with large Fires lighted.—Keeping a *Fête*-day at Sea.—Our Captain's Reward for Services at the Caucasus.—Variable Weather and Winds.—Bad and unequal sailing of our Ship.—A tight Gale.

THE sea, commonly called that of Ochotsk, is a great gulf shut in from the North Pacific Ocean by a chain of large and small islands. It is bounded on the west by the continental coasts of Siberia and China, and on the north, the east, and the south, by the peninsula of Kamtschatka and by the Kurile Islands, belonging to the Russians and the Japanese. It is about 1200 or 1400 miles in extent from north to south, and between 700 and 800 from west to east; and our course was towards one of the passes between the Russian islands.

Those who have travelled much by sea are well acquainted with the manner in which the days blend and confound themselves with one another, and the indistinct recollection that the traveller retains, after his arrival in port, of what severally distinguished the greater part of them while he was at sea. When, indeed, there are ports and islands to touch at, where there may be even the smallest objects of interest to

observe, or where there may be enemies, civilised or barbarian, to encounter, both the tediousness of the voyage, and of any narrative of it that may be written will be proportionably relieved. Or when a sailor writes, his knowledge of the noble art by which his ship is conducted over the trackless seas, gives him a power which it were in vain for any one not thoroughly conversant with both the theory and practice of navigation to attempt to excel. During the voyage on which we are now embarked, such few incidents as are thought worthy of notice will be set down in the order of time in which they occurred.

The first remark which appears in the note-book which I kept on board the Irtysch, apart from latitudes and longitudes, and other every-day matter, is precisely one of those which show how great our interest when at sea in trifles that afterwards even escape our memory, when they have not been written down at the time of their occurrence. On the morning after we left the land, we saw very near us one of those monsters of the deep in which the ocean abounds in every latitude —

> —— "that sea-beast
> Leviathan, which God of all his works
> Created hugest that swim the ocean stream."

He was observed ploughing up the sea, as he held his course majestically along, with a great portion of his enormous body above the surface of the water, and spouting up at intervals one or two great fountains of the liquid element upon which we floated. All attention was directed to the great sea-beast, which was by some pronounced to be a spermaceti, and by others a black whale; none of the first of which kind, nevertheless, I believe, have yet been found in this sea. This question, however, was not the cause of the interest that the great fish was to us at this moment. It was rather as an omen and messenger of good or evil, that we

athan was an especial object of interest to us.

The ancient superstitions of sailors navigating the lantic, which doubtless originated in, or was nourished , the hopes and fears natural to our position when out sight of land, and the uncertainty concerning the ngth of our voyage, have been perhaps as completely bdued by the introduction of steam navigation, as all at kind of enjoyment commonly called romance, which elonged a few years ago to a journey from one end of ur island to the other, has been destroyed by our railvays. But since the Tritons and Nereides, and all the est of the brave subjects of the supreme deity of the sea, have not been disturbed and frighted from this part of their sovereign's domain, we must not expect to find natural causes sought for to explain every event here, just as if Siberians and Kamtschadales had navigated our European rivers, or lived in our material world, or were accustomed in any way to the investigation of truth.

"Chief officer," said our captain, as he stepped upon a gun-carriage, and, while supporting himself by a stay, he regarded the movements of the monster, though he was probably rather a conformist to, than a believer in, the superstitions of the seamen, "go aloft and report in what direction the whale is swimming."

"*Sloutchez*" (directly), was the reply.

"And, second officer," continued the captain, "look at the compass, as the officer aloft points out the course which the whale is taking."

"*Sloutchez*," replied the second officer.

And in a moment the chief officer was at the masthead, and the second officer was over the "binnacle" with his eyes fixed aloft.

"But first, what manner of fish does it now appear to be?" demanded the captain of the officer aloft.

"Most certainly a spermaceti," replied the officer.

"And how does he head?" then said the captain.

"In this direction," replied the officer stretching out his hand.

"Which is," said the second officer, as the captain turned his eyes towards him, "exactly west-south-west."

"Nothing could be better," then said the captain. "Has he two spouts or one?"

"But one," was the reply.

"Enough: check the yards there, men," the captain now called aloud. "Officer of the watch, keep the ship a point free, and let her go through the water. Quarter-master, nothing to windward during the watch."

"It is impossible that any thing could be more favourable," now said our worthy commander, as he paced the deck with an air of satisfaction which his features had not previously worn. "The wind will soon be west-south-west, and we shall have a favourable voyage."

As to myself, I make a point on these occasions of not discrediting any thing that it is agreeable to believe, and of not troubling myself about the reasons or proofs that things are what they seem to be, so long as the omens are deemed favourable. But I nevertheless claim the privilege at all times of doubting, whenever the signs appear to point to things evil. And, therefore, I rejoiced with the rest at the good hope with which the leviathan had inspired us, of a favourable passage across this unfrequented sea.

We dodged on very well for some days, without seeing any thing, save spouting whales, which were very plentiful, and happily generally sailing along in the right direction, and a few birds, among which were a duck and a hawk. The hawk, after hovering about us for an hour or two, towards evening alighted to rest himself, and roost upon one of our yard-arms; but nothing was prognosticated from his presence, though

reover, that it was very strong upon the coast that s nearest to us, which was that from which we came. t the duck, which came late in the evening for his ght's rest also (for he was not of any of the species nich float continually on the sea), settled upon the ck, and nothing whatever was divined from his visit, d no one knew the direction from which he came. Ve put him under cover for the night, and in the orning it was proposed to make a *stchee* of him. This was, however, forbidden by our captain, who said that he duck came, sent by whom we know not, to seek our hospitality, which we had given him, and that now we could not lawfully destroy him. So he was set loose, and he settled upon the water near us.

Some other fowl, however, of the many species in which this sea abounds, kept us daily conjecturing and speculating, though in a very indeterminate manner, upon our future prospects. There was in fact a great deal of difference of opinion about the indications and omens; and one saw good, and drew the most favourable conclusions, and was certain that he was right, when the birds flew high or low, or sat on the water in clusters or apart; while others were full of apprehension, when they observed the very same signs, which they were just as positive portended evil.

There was, however, a novelty to myself among the sea-fowl which we continually saw. There were two species of gulls keeping company, and living, as we were well able to perceive, in a strange relationship to each other. In some respects they might be said to very much resemble honest men and thieves among ourselves, though the plundered party of the winged tribe certainly bore their injuries more patiently than most honest men do at all times bear theirs; and this, notwithstanding that the kind of robbery was of

a more vexatious description than often falls to the lo of men to suffer. The injured party of these tw winged species were gulls about the size of the large sort of the common gulls upon our coast, and the othe party were of another species much larger. The smaller sort were sitting upon the water in groups, in each of which there were from about thirty to a hundred birds, and the larger sort were hovering over these in the proportion of about one of their kind to twenty of the smaller sort. The smaller birds, as they sat in the water, were engaged in catching fishes, which appeared to be abundant and to be about the size of smelts, and the larger sort were occupied in darting at and snatching the fishes from the mouths of the smaller before there was time to swallow them. The Russians call the birds of the voracious species by the very appropriate term of *morskoy-naz-boinik* (sea-robbers or pirates). Both the species were abundant; and they afforded us some amusement in watching the dexterous thefts of the robber birds, and the apparent indifference of the dupes, as long as we had fine weather, during our passage of this sea.

Early during the voyage, a little matter occurred which regarded the comfort of the three tenants of the captain's cabin, the commander himself, and his servant and his guest, which I cannot forbear mentioning. The religious, and, at the same time, tolerant spirit generally prevalent among the Russians has been sufficiently dwelt upon. The captain's servant, Antonio, though remarkable for the best qualities that any man of any country, in his capacity, might possess, was nevertheless among the less enlightened of his race, and was an exception to the general prevalence of religious tolerance, at least among the Russians of the orthodox church, of which he was a member, and not less a stranger to the light, thoughtless, and gay

racteristics of the humbler grades generally of the ssian people. He was, however, a genius, and very ful in several little handiworks; and, being much ued for his strict honesty and faithfulness, he was on more familiar terms with his master than is ually the case with Russian servants. But he had o inveterate prejudices, or passions, from which the ptain had not been able to wean him. He was a reat hater of the fair sex, not one of whom he ould so much as look upon, and not the less so f all foreigners, not because they were not Russians, but because he did not believe that they were Christians.

On account of this latter prejudice, he had during the first few days of our voyage conceived so bad an opinion of myself, that he had not even entered my particular cabin to perform such little necessary offices as are among the duties of a domestic; but with this negligence the captain had not been made acquainted. On the first Saturday evening, however, of our voyage, while I was upon deck, after we had taken tea, it happened that the captain, who remained below, in conversing more familiarly with his servant than he had before done since we sailed, gave the good man an opportunity, and the courage that he seemed to have before wanted, of asking a question which he said he had for several days wished to put concerning the foreign guest. He was still very cautious, however, in his approaches to the subject of his inquiry, and prefaced his question by saying, he trusted he would be pardoned, on account of the question being, as he believed, upon a subject that concerned every one in the ship as much as himself. And upon full leave being given to him to ask any question he pleased, he said that he wished to know whether his master really

was, as it appeared to him, entertaining, and eating a drinking daily with a heathen.

But it is necessary here to remark, that genera among the Russians of this class, not one of t numerous sects, bearing a common name, into whic the religion of civilised man has been divided, sav those into which the Russians themselves are divided has been so much as heard of; and the omission of the outward signs of the Christian faith, which are in universal use among the different sects in Russia, ranks the nonconformist to these usages in the eyes of the less enlightened of the people, with the Tartars, the Buddhists, and the worst pagans, none of whom they consider to be fit to sit at table with Christian men. Thus, my omission of the ceremony of crossing myself before and after eating, and bowing to the little picture which hung in our cabin and sanctified one of its corners, in the same manner that it is found to do every where, from the chambers of the palace to those of the humblest cottage, on shore, had so shocked Antonio's susceptible religious feelings, that, as he declared himself, he could not sleep tranquilly on board, until he had ascertained whether his master's guest was or was not what he seemed to him to be.

Our worthy commander, who, as I had many opportunities afterwards of observing, possessed eminently the two points in religion which I found so prevalent among the Russians—strong conviction of the truth of what is taught, and unlimited tolerance—made an attempt, in reply to the question put to him, to enlighten his servant, by giving him some general account of the true state of the Christian world, with a few particulars concerning the more remarkable sects that were not generally known in Russia, and the differences between the external symbols which they used. But

he remained, as he afterwards informed me, for the present uncertain whether what he had said had been either understood or wholly credited.

In the meantime, not a word of the conversation between the captain and his servant was for the present communicated to me. But it happened the very morning after it took place, while I remained quite ignorant of the relations in which I was thought by the pious domestic to stand to all the good Christians on board, that I very unconsciously established my claim to the rights belonging to all the members of the Christian family. To refuse to conform to the external signs especially of religion, whenever this course is productive of ill-will, or liable to be misinterpreted, provided the conscience is not violated in so doing, and especially where there does not seem to be anything in the religion in question that is contrary to our ideas of morality, and where we do not thereby give any just cause for an accusation of hypocrisy, I confess has always appeared to me to be unreasonable; and I should, for my part, have no objection at any time to make a thousand crosses at a single meal, if it pleased any body to see them made, or if the neglect of making them hurt any one's feelings in the manner it did our Antonio's; but I should be sorry to say that I thought that the viands would nourish the body the better, or that the soul would receive the smallest benefit from them, since men's conduct towards one another, and not external symbols, the Author of Christianity certainly taught, is chiefly regarded by the Creator. Thus it happened, that when the captain, over our breakfast, informed me that he would to-day read prayers, to serve for mass, in the presence of the sailors, I told him that if it were agreeable to him I would attend. And if any one among a tolerant people were to do otherwise, it appears to me that he would disgrace any

Christian church or community whatsoever to which he might happen to belong.

Be this, however, as it may, after the hour of prayer to-day, at the expense of mingling with the officers and seamen while engaged in the act of worship, and listening for a short time to prayers read in the Sclavonic language, of which the reader himself knew but a very little, and myself not a syllable, my position was quite changed; for I soon found that I had thus easily established a Christian character, and gained the good will and good service at the same time of the honest man that attended in the cabin, and, moreover, secured my comfort for the rest of the voyage.

On the 29th of the month, after dark, we observed a great fire in the direction of the south, which our officers and crew knew very well proceeded from one of several whalers, belonging to merchants of the maritime nations, which had lately found their way into this sea. As they melt their blubber in enormous cauldrons upon deck, wherever they appear, they illuminate the ocean during the night for many miles around them.

The 30th was the *fête*-day of a relation of our captain, which we all united in keeping. Nothing is more characteristic of the Russians, than the manner in which they keep the *fête*-days of their relations among all classes, even from the prince of the land to his meanest subjects. Our officers were on this occasion equipped in their full-dress uniforms, in their newest gloss, and wore their side-arms, and the seamen were mustered, and the champagne sparkled upon the binnacle; and if there were no other advantage to be reaped from the display, it was at least calculated to beguile a portion of a tedious day. It happened that it was the cause, however, to myself of a little revelation that it was agreeable to receive. Our captain alone of

the officers came upon deck without his sword, and Antonio, seeming to perceive that this was not quite ship-shape, brought up his master's weapon, which being of a description to attract curiosity, caused an examination to take place, that led to the discovery of an inscription beneath the hilt, which upon inquiry I found signified that it had been presented to its possessor for his bravery in an affair on shore at the Caucasus, under General Ryeffoki.

From this time, until the 4th of September, we had variable weather and changeable winds. Thus in spite of the auspicious omens at our sailing, our progress was slow, and we were yet but little more than half our passage across the sea. Our transformed collier, too, was a bad sailer, and under the most favourable circumstances we had not yet got out of her above six and a half knots. But she was worse than an ordinary bad sailer; for she was unequal in her rate of sailing upon different tacks. It was the first instance of the kind I ever met, on board any ship of any nation, and I felt confident that some mischief must have been done to her keel. When, in fact, we got six knots out of her upon one tack, we could not get more than four-and-a-half upon the other, with the same breeze, and with the same canvass spread, and sailing under the same circumstances in relation to the running seas. There was no suspicion, however, on the part of the officers of there being any other reason for this than that kind of want of skill in her constructor, so common among the architects of Russia, which has left nine-tenths of the church-steeples of the empire absolutely lop-sided.

On the 4th of the month we experienced a tight gale, which, as it was from the eastward, obliged us to lie to under the close-reefed main-topsail. In this position, however, the Irtysch behaved admirably, and made some amends for her bad sailing. Although the

waves, as in all narrow seas, were short and quick, and knocked rudely enough against her weather bow, she sat, as seamen say, like a duck upon the water, and scarce a drop of the element upon which we floated came on board of her.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

### VOYAGE FROM OCHOTSK TO KAMTSCHATKA—*continued.*

Agreeable Break in our Voyage.—American Whaler.—Character of the Encounter.—Boarded by the Captain of the Whaler.—Particulars of our Intercourse.—Interchange of News.—Good Sense of Sailors generally.—The Captain of the Whaler's Idea of a French Republic.—News of the Ochotsk Sea.—Earthquake felt at Sea.—Make the Kurile Islands.—Agreeable Sensation in making the Land.—Magnificent Spectacle that these Islands present.—Volcanic Peaks and Cones.—Smoking Mountains.—Exhibition at Sun-rise.—A remarkable Phenomenon peculiar to this Sea.—Notice of the Kurile Isles.—Inhabitants.—Distinct Races.—An original People.—Mode of Life.—Trade with the Russo-American Company.—Jealousy of the Japanese.

On the 8th of the month we experienced a little relief to the every-day occurrences of the voyage, which we had not anticipated. At day-break in the morning, while we were scarcely lying our course, dead on a wind, with a light breeze from the southward, a sail appeared in sight to windward, bearing down upon us under a press of canvass. The telescopes were immediately in hand, and we soon perceived the American flag; and our captain had no doubt of her being one of the several whale-ships which had lately found their way into this sea. In less than two hours the ship hove-to within gun-shot of us, upon our weather quarter; and as we followed her example, she lowered her boat and boarded us, when she proved to be the whale-ship Marcia, Ellison master, of New Bedford.

I cannot refrain from being particular in the relation of this incident and break in our voyage, on

account of the interest excited by the contrast between the two parties encountering upon the waters of this little-frequented sea.

As the whaler's boat came under our lee quarter, the telescopes that had aided in scanning her as she approached were placed under the arms of those who had been using them, or upon their rests on the capstan, and all the officers, save the captain and such as were on duty, and all the passengers, now hung over the quarter-rail, to scan a little closer the visages of those they were about to see for the first time, hold a moment's intercourse with, and then see no more.

I do not know a more interesting moment, upon a long voyage especially, when we have seen no strange faces for some time, than that at which the officer of a ship we fall in with, jumps upon the deck upon which we stand, or that at which we mount on board another ship, as it has often been my lot to do, and exchange mutual inquiries about the accidents of our voyages, and concerning the last news of importance at the ports from which we severally came. In the whaler's boat sat six rowers and a steersman, all in their red shirt sleeves, and as they put in their oars, and the boat reached the waist of the ship, the steersman sprang up to the gangway, and was, in spite of his red sleeves, easily recognised as the commander of the ship. In the meantime, though he ought not to have been surprised, as he must have seen our guns peeping out at the port-holes as he came alongside, he appeared for a moment taken "aback" at the ceremony of his reception by the officer of the watch, with the gay uniforms which he saw about the deck. After an instant's pause, however, he was conducted by the officer who received him to the quarter-deck, where he was introduced to our captain.

Of such a character had so far been the ceremony on one side, and the impossibility of imitating it success-

lly in shirt sleeves upon the other, that it seemed if the intercourse of the two ships was going to be ry unsatisfactory. But it was gratifying to see how asily good sense set aside etiquette, when its observance ould have stood in the way of the agreeable intercourse hat the time promised. The gallant captain of the man-f-war, decorated with his ensigns of rank and autho-ity, now offered his hand to the master of the whaler n his red shirt sleeves; and the two appropriately dressed monarchs of all "they *daily* surveyed," shook hands as heartily together, with the eyes of the whole ship upon the scene, as if they had been two ancient friends.

The invariable first questions which pass upon the occasion of a parley with the speaking-trumpet between the commanders of two ships at sea when a mighty wave still rolls between them, are well known. "Whence came ye?" "How long have you been out?" "Where are you bound to?" and, "What is your longitude?" The same subjects, somewhat amplified, usually form also the first portion of a closer intercourse of the two parties on board one of the vessels. The commander of the whaler had not expected to find any one on board the Russian ship to act as interpreter; and he had boarded us chiefly for the purpose of making a little break in the sameness of his own constant avocation; and, moreover, as he had no doubt that we were lately from the land, to inquire at the same time our longitude, the badness of the weather having prevented his taking any observations of any of the heavenly bodies for several days. Before, therefore, any difficulty seemed to arise to render an interpreter useful, he demanded our longitude, and was easily understood. And as the day's reckoning had just been completed by the chief officer, who was present, the question was answered by presenting the

slate which had been lying on the companion with the figures that resulted from the work. Upon this, the master of the whaler took his pencil out of his waistcoat pocket, and wrote down our longitude upon the palm of his left hand. Certainly, the Chaldean shepherds could not have had a simpler means of registering their astronomical observations. Then taking the slate in his hand, he put down for our information the longitude by his account, which differed but little from ours, and which, as he had two chronometers and we had none, was most likely, notwithstanding the little use he had been lately able to make of them, nearer the truth than ours.

But now that the intercourse could not by the same simple means proceed further, the time was arrived for the intervention of a third party; and upon my addressing our welcome visitor in our common mother tongue, the hardy sailor took the opportunity before every thing else, to apologise as handsomely as possible for boarding a man-of-war in his red shirt sleeves. Then followed some such questions as those above mentioned; and as the weather was fine, and the two ships were now sailing in the same direction, our captain invited the master of the whaler below, where over a glass of good wine, we entered upon other subjects which afforded us a most agreeable hour's conversation.

The last dates from the countries that play the leading parts, whether in comedy or tragedy, upon the wide stage of the world, usually upon these occasions precede our more particular inquiries concerning the most important news. And when it is found which of the parties encountering has the latest accounts, the next inquiries proceed from the other side. What was the great international play in course of representation when the last accounts came away? Who were the

actors? Who the "robustious and periwig-pated" princes, that were tearing the passions of the nations to tatters? And which of the monarchs were tranquilly beholding the last scene of the mighty drama, always enacting in farce, tragedy or dumb show, with never-ceasing plot and counterplot, on the great theatre of the world?

As the whaler had been two years out, it was our fortune upon this occasion to have the latest news, and moreover, as it happened, to be the brief chroniclers of the first scene of the serious play then opening upon the eventful year of 1848. I had quitted Irkoutsk just after the intelligence of the flight of Louis Philippe had reached that capital; but all that we could say for certain was, that France was once more a republic.

If sailors are not the most ingenious and subtle reasoners in the world, they are not the least remarkable as a class of men for their general good sense and correct judgment. If they are not profound politicians and political economists, they are freer than any other body of men from those motives to a narrow judgment, which necessarily influence those who sit continually too near the scene upon which men's eyes are chiefly bent, to leave them at liberty to generalise their thoughts. Perhaps the very space which is continually before their eyes may aid in resisting the tendency of the mind to circumscribe its thoughts within the sphere of its own particular experience. Be these things, however, as they may, I was curious to note how the sailor citizen of a republic, turned for a moment from his whale-fishing, would receive our European news, and what observations he would favour us with.

The sailor reflected but for an instant, and then exclaimed, "France a republic! The French people are not of a character to maintain such a government. Even in America, we, who have known no other, and

selves, find it as much as we can do to weather the storms of the presidential election. How, then, can a nation of the most excitable people in the world, be expected to ride out the quick succession of political tempests which must necessarily follow the establishment of such a government?

In return for the pithy intelligence which excited these observations, we received the news of the sea upon which we were floating. The captain of the whaler told us that he believed that about forty vessels, for the same objects as himself, had found their way this year for the first time into this sea, and that they were chiefly French and American; but that, owing to the bad weather that had prevailed during the greater part of this season, notwithstanding the whales were plentiful, he believed there had not been the average number of them, of one year with another in the northern fishery, yet taken. He informed us, that of thirteen whales which he had killed, he had lost three by the bad weather before he could secure the oily portion of them; and that when the last gale came on, which was the same that we had experienced, he had thirty barrels of oil on his deck, which he saved with great difficulty. He still wanted, he said, fifteen fish to fill his vessel with oil, but which number he hoped to make up in this sea in the course of the next summer. But he was somewhat surprised when he heard from our captain that the Russian government was contemplating, or had determined upon sending some men-of-war a little more formidable in effect than the Irtysch, to take absolute possession of the sea, and prevent the vessels of all other nations from entering and fishing without a pass from the Russian government. This, however, seems a measure that it is hardly likely can be contemplated, seeing that a large portion

this sea are Japanese and Chine
ne sea may be entered without even appro
Russian territory.

The master of the whaler also informed us, t
a number of ships from the same port as hims
en wrecked upon the coast of Japan with 30
s of oil on board, and that he himself had n
caped driving on shore during the same gal
ve us an account likewise of the shock of ar
ake, which he had felt in the middle of this se
e 8th of June, and which was so severe
ought for a moment that his ship had struck
ock. All seamen, indeed, with whom I ha
ersed, who have witnessed the effects of this
enon at sea, give the same account of their sen
was on board a ship in the port of Valparaiso
night of the 4th and 5th of June, 1849,
shock was felt; but I was asleep, and quite unco
of it. Others, however, were awakened; an
thought that the movement they felt was caused
grating of the hawser from our ship across the
from another; and others, that we had drifted
another ship, and were thumping against her
motion of the water.

After an hour's agreeable intercourse, the com
of the whaler left us, and the two ships soon
company. At sunset, we were not by our re
above 110 miles from the Kurile Isles, which f
south-eastern boundary of the Ochotsk Sea; an
were lying our course with a spanking breeze,
every reasonable hope of seeing some of the
(many of which are visible at the distance o
miles), or of even being very near them at day-b
following morning.

The breeze continued, and we were not disap
As the next day broke, our captain came to m

to give me notice that the land was in sight at no g distance from us, and that the view of what was alre visible, afforded such a magnificent spectacle, tha was desirous I should not lose the opportunity of see it before it might be obscured by the mists which h almost perpetually about these islands, and upon i eastern coasts of this sea.

Those who have made voyages in high latitudes esp cially, will not readily forget the agreeable sensatio which they cannot fail to have experienced, when afte looking for many days only upon the sky and th water, divided by the unbroken line of the horizo with nothing but the clouds to vary the one, and change in the motion of the sea the other, they again be hold the firm land. Probably, indeed, there are few tra vellers by sea who would exchange the feelings that have possessed them at this moment, with those they have experienced upon entering port, if allowance be made for the pleasure of meeting our friends, when we chance to have any at the place at which we arrive.

It was hardly full day, when I came upon deck; but there was light enough to see plainly the cone of a mighty volcanic mountain, forming the island of Ahlehead, which appeared towering above a stratum of vapours that divided the mountain about a third of its full height from its summit. The breeze that had brought us within view of the land during the night, had now died away; and there was nothing to interrupt our calm contemplation of the scene which the increase of light was rapidly presenting to us. Our distance from the island by cross-bearings taken from its points at the base, was found to be twenty-eight miles, though it did not appear to be above eight or ten. The floating mists which divided the mountain were drawn out in a long and straight line, without any variation of colour; while from the top of the cone above them,

ended a still subtler element, proceeding from the rning substances within the crater of the volcano, and ich at the limits of its altitude formed a curling cloud deeper hue, which by the constant succession of the ating particles that were taking the place of those at were lost to the sight, appeared as motionless as the apours below. But our view did not long remain con-ned to the objects that were at first visible. As the ight increased, the larger island of Pero Muchan, which s about forty miles in length, gradually came into view in the same direction, about fifteen miles more distant from our place of observation, and presented a series of volcanic mountains with cones and peaks of various forms and altitudes. From one of these alone, which towered high above the constant stratum of still vapours that divided all the cones and rude summits from the bases upon which they rested, ascended a volume of dense smoke, which the winds dispersed at a great height above the mouth of the crater from which it issued.

As we stood contemplating this magnificent display of some of the mighty natural objects which so vary the scenery that adorns our fair planet, the far greater object of wonder, and the greatest that we are permitted to look upon, was on the point of coming into view, and the eastern sky already exhibited the livelier colours and deeper shades which in all lands proclaim equally the return of day. But now as the rays of the bright orb fell upon the peaks and cones of the mountains, all that caught the direct beam became streaked and shaded with lines of varied colours, which the snow in the ravines and the deeper shades of the bare earth which divided them, severally reflected. But before the great source of all we enjoy became visible from our deck, the floating vapours also received his direct rays, and the magnificent spectacle which we now beheld, was extended to the limits of the vision on both sides.

I shall here mention, upon the authority of our captain and two of his officers, a remarkable phenomenon which is frequently observed in these seas, and which is called by the natives of the coasts *spolocka*. Its most common appearance was described to me by these officers with the aid of an old sailor who had navigated this sea, and lived upon its coasts for fifty years, and to whom it was consequently much more familiar. A bright speck of white light or luminous vapour first appears upon the horizon in the north, and presently seems to rise in a column of about 6 or 7 degrees in breadth, which continues to ascend, and to increase in length until the upper end reaches within a few degrees of the zenith, at which time the lower portion appears to separate itself from the horizon. It continues however, to advance, in falling towards the south, until what was the upper end as it rose, becomes the lower as it approaches the southern horizon, beneath the watery line of which it now gradually sinks until it entirely disappears. The whole time of the passage of this remarkable light across the hemisphere, from the time of its appearance until it is lost sight of in the south, does not exceed three minutes.

I have seen many different appearances of the aurora borealis in the higher latitudes of both continents as well as at sea, but I never saw any thing that resembled this light. Yet I am disposed to believe that it is but a variation of that unaccountable phenomenon, arising from causes yet unknown. Those, however, who gave me this account, and who were of course well acquainted with the varied appearances of the aurora borealis, were not of this opinion.

While we are considering what appears peculiar to this sea, I must mention, that I remarked during this voyage, that that sparkling light seen at night in the water when agitated in every sea, and formerly supposed

to be phosphoric, prevailed to a much greater degree in this than in any sea I had before navigated. If it really proceed, as I believe it is now stated, from any form of animated nature or of organised being, at what a profound depth must the secrets of Nature yet lie hid from our observation!

The remarkable chain of islands of which we have now several under our view, whether we regard their position, or the natural wonders they exhibit, belong in part to the Russians and in part to the Japanese, two people probably, that of all the varieties of the human species the least resemble each other, yet they are not inhabited either by the one or the other. Some of them are inhabited by men, nevertheless, of two races almost as distinct from each other as the two people by whom they are governed, or more properly speaking, to whose dominion they have been severally subjected, as their inhabitants are described as scarcely living in a state of society. The Russian islands are six in number, without taking those into account which are littlé more than the cones and craters of volcanos, or those, of which there are several, that are formed of mere rude and barren rocks. They are all, indeed, of volcanic formation. The most northern of them is that of Sumshie, which lies between the larger island of Pero Muchan, in sight of which we are now sailing, and the southern point of the grand peninsula of Kamtschatka. The most southern is the island of Urup, which forms one side of one of the passages, of which there are many, connecting the Ochotsk Sea with the ocean. The south point of this island is in the latitude of 45° 35′.

The Japanese portion of this chain of islands, without taking account of the large island of Jesso or Matsmai, which forms the south-eastern barrier of the Ochotsk

Sea, consists of two long islands called Iturup and Kumoschir or Ischikstan.

The Russian islands only are at this time inhabited by portions of the two distinct races. The race which inhabits the most northern are called by the Kamtschadales (who themselves have been long subjected to regular government, and are comparatively a civilised people), simply Kurilians, after the general name given to the islands. They resemble the inhabitants of the southern districts of Kamtschatka both in feature and in their language, and they have doubtless a common origin with that people. But the inhabitants of the more southern of the Russian islands, are called by the Kamtschadales Kurilian Mahnali. These seem to be quite an original people. A Russian that I afterwards saw, who had been at a station that has been established by the Russo-American Company upon the north side of the island Pero Muchan for the furtherance of their commerce in furs, and who was well acquainted with them, informed me, that they did not certainly resemble the Chinese, whom he had seen, in the slightest degree; and, as it is supposed that the Japanese are closely related to that people, probably none of the islanders are related to either the Japanese or the Chinese. The same gentleman informed me, also, that the last mentioned of these inhabitants are such a hairy race as to have obtained a name from the more northern inhabitants of the island, equivalent to that of "hairy men." Neither of these races of these islands have fixed abodes, and both live chiefly upon seals, sea-cows, or the walrus, and a species of the same genus called by the Russians by a term that would signify in English sea-beaver, and of which we saw several as we passed through the strait. They have both now, however, begun to trade with the company above named in the skins of these animals, from which intercourse they will

no doubt, in time, receive the same advantages that are enjoyed by the other races which have been incorporated with the subjects of the empire.

The Japanese islands were till very lately inhabited by the same race of men as those which occupy the more southern portion of the Russian islands. But their population has been withdrawn by the Japanese government, in order to separate them as far as possible from their brethren inhabiting the Russian islands, so as entirely to cut off all intercourse between them.

## CHAP. XXIX.

VOYAGE FROM OCHOTSK TO KAMTSCHATKA—*continued.*

Baffling Winds.—First Sight of one of the Kurile Isles.—Driven off.—Approaches to the Strait between the Islands.—The Mariner's Sentinels.—Obscurity of the Passage.—Currents.—Captain's Birth-place.—Favourable Omen.—Great Islands visible.—Winds.—Make the Coast of Kamtschatka.—Scenery.—Approach the Land.—View of our Port.—Prudence of our Captain.—Hawl off.—Disappointment—Notice of the Remainder of the Voyage.—Second View of the Port.—Threatened with Destruction.—Alarm of Fire.—Cautious Proceeding of the Captain.—Plan to prevent the Breaking out of the Flames.—Admirable Order preserved.—Discussion concerning bearing up for some other Port.—Again approach the Land.—A Whaler. Enter the Passage to the Bay.—Arrival in Port.—Character of our Navigation.—Officers.—Seamen.

We had baffling winds and variable weather during the whole of the day on which we made the islands, settling in the evening in an east wind, with a densely loaded atmosphere. Our course had been directed during the day towards the strait which forms a passage from the Ochotsk Sea into the ocean, between the islands of Pero Muchan and Ownekotan, which is the third navigable channel south of the point of the peninsula of Kamtschatka, and the safest in the northern portion of this chain of islands, on account of its superior breadth; and before dark, we obtained a sight of the islet of Sherinska, which lies near the north entrance of the strait.

During the early part of the night it blew a gale from the east, and we were driven some leagues to the westward of the islands; but as the day approached

the wind veered to the northward; and as it now became more moderate, and the thick clouds and mists began to disperse, we made all sail towards the strait, through which it was our intention to pass. But as we approached the land again, we found the atmosphere as loaded as before with vapours and thick clouds; and nothing was visible around us, when we supposed ourselves at the very entrance of the strait. Suddenly, however, the high and rocky islet of Sherinska, which we had seen on the previous evening, appeared on one side of us at about thirteen miles' distance, and in a few minutes afterwards, another similar islet upon the opposite side, at the same distance, called Monkuruska. These two islets stand out on either side before the entrance of the strait, the very mid-channel of which we thus now found we were approaching with admirable exactness. But for two hours after this, we yet saw nothing of the coasts and mountains of the larger islands.

These two conspicuous islets are no more, indeed, than the mere cones of the craters of volcanos; and they are appropriately called by the Russians *Karaooli* (the Sentinels), because, in thick weather, by reason of their less attracting the clouds and fogs than the larger islands, they are seen in time to warn the navigator (as it happened, indeed, in our own case) of his near approach to the strait, where he might, without such notice, be subjected to the influence of dangerous currents before he was sufficiently certain of his position to direct his course through the passage. They were not, however, now sufficiently well seen to enable us to distinguish their volcanic character. But the officers on board informed me, that as they passed them by on their voyage to Ochotsk, the one that was on the south side of the entrance was disgorging a broad volume of dense smoke.

As soon as the two Sentinels were plainly enough seen for our purpose, our course was set with confidence; and as the wind now veered to the south-west and blew a gentle gale, we fairly entered the passage between the larger islands, which we were not yet able to perceive, under full sail, with as much security as if we had seen the land upon both sides of us.

As we advanced, the two Sentinels became again obscured from our sight. But we were assured of our position by the smoothness of the waters in which we were now sailing.

I do not remember any where on board ship being placed in a more curious position than that in which we now found ourselves. With a strong breeze and under crowded canvass, we were sailing with the utmost confidence between two rocky shores, through a channel about sixteen or eighteen miles in breadth, and without any fixed object visible in any direction around. And as the day advanced the sky became clear overhead, and we could see many miles astern, and towards the ocean almost to the horizon; while the land, with its peaks and mountains, was enveloped in dense clouds, which entirely concealed it from our view on either side, so that we appeared to be sailing between two vast walls of condensed vapours and dark clouds.

While we were gliding gently, yet rapidly, through the smooth water of the strait, Antonio made his appearance upon deck, loaded with bottles of champagne. These I supposed to be for the purpose of greeting worthily the sovereign of the ocean, into whose wider domain we were now launching, or such of his brave subjects as this portion of his watery empire might especially acknowledge; but it turned out to be an offering of our captain to the manes of his parents, in commemoration of his own birth, which took place in this very strait on board a ship of war, which his

father commanded at the happy epoch, about thirty years since.

While we were occupied in aiding the captain in honouring his parents and hallowing the place of his birth, a favourable omen, as if some of the Tritons and Nereides of the sea took the compliment to themselves, greeted us. One of the sea-castors or beavers before mentioned, with which the seas that wash these islands abound, popped his head above the water and stood erect, with at least as much as three feet of his body exposed to our view, as if he were a sea-god that was contemplating us approvingly, on account of our loyalty, as we passed by. There was at least not a man among us that did not augur from this visitation a speedy and happy termination of our already too-long-protracted voyage.

We were now going rapidly through the water; but at what rate we were passing the land we could not tell, owing to the uncertainty of the currents in the passages between these islands, which depend chiefly upon the winds, and they had been variable. But about two hours before sunset, the peaks and summits of the higher mountains upon the northern, and soon afterwards those upon the southern island, began to appear, though still confounded with the dark clouds which wholly obscured their solid masses.

After sun-set, the land became visible on both sides of the strait. And as we launched into the ocean, we distinguished very plainly the most eastern capes of the two islands, from which we shaped a course towards the south-east coast of the peninsula of Kamtschatka with a spanking south-west breeze, and in full hopes of reaching the Bay of Avasha, in which the Russian seat of government is established, in three or four days.

Upon the whole of the day after our entrance into the

Pacific Ocean, we were sailing parallel with the ch of islands, with a strong wind from the west-south-wes but though the atmosphere was clear around us, th land was not visible, on account of the clouds and va pours that still hung about it.

The next day we obtained the first sight of the coas of Kamtschatka which presented an irregular line of rugged mountains, the higher of which at their sum mits were covered with snow. We appeared here to have got quite into the region of the whales. At one part of the day no less than five were blowing around us at the same time.

The fine weather, with a strong westerly wind, continued until the early part of the third day after we left the Ochotsk Sea, when we obtained a view of the mountains in the vicinity of the Bay of Avasha, to which we were bound. The scenery of this particular part of the coast is of the grandest description. A wide range of rude and elevated land presents itself to the spectator as far as the eye can reach, from the midst of which three enormous mountains, whose summits terminate in volcanic cones, rise above the rest, and add that finish to the wild magnificence of nature, which the domes and minarets when seen from the same element upon which we were floating, high towering above the irregular buildings of a great metropolis, add to the most remarkable of the works of men. I cannot forget the raptures with which we looked upon this display of the prodigality of nature in her sublimest works in the material world.

As we approached the land, a lower country in advance of these mountains seemed to rise gradually out of the water, and by and by presented a bold, high and rude coast, amid which we were able to distinguish the entrance of our desired port, which appeared like a rent in the rocks dividing the rugged table hills of the

ısport upon the grand natural scenery upon which our :s rested, and cherishing hopes through the agreeable ıspect before us of entering the port that very ·ening, and while the breeze and the weather were r, our prudent captain communicated his suspicions to the fulfilment of our expectations.

It must be remembered what sea we were navigating, ıd upon what coast we had arrived. And now, although ıe wind was dead into the port, a doubt had arisen in ıe captain's mind, upon measuring the distance by the earings of the capes and headlands upon either side of ıs, and the rate of the ship's sailing, and marking the ıour, whether, in case we should persevere in running lown, we could with certainty enter before the close of the day; and, after some hesitation, the accomplishment of our object did not appear to him sufficiently probable to admit of our running upon the land with the wind directly on shore, without great imprudence and risk, until the next day. The east wind, which was blowing, is usually accompanied upon this coast by a misty atmosphere and bad weather; and in case of its thickening in before we reached the mouth of the port, we might hardly expect to find our way into the strait; while with a considerable increase of the wind, it might be impossible to work off the coast. The vessel's head was therefore reluctantly placed in the opposite direction, and, to those who knew the nature of the winds and the weather upon this coast, without much prospect of our being able again to approach the port for some days.

Up to this time, I have set down all the incidents that seemed to offer any variation from the every-day experience of most voyages. After this, we passed no less than sixteen days more in perpetual contest with the winds and the sea, before we were able to accomplish

our entrance into the Bay of Avasha. A very b notice of the occurrences of that period will suffice.

It was not, indeed, two hours from the time our s head was turned from her port, before she was u close-reefed topsails, and such storm staysails a could bear, with the wind due east, with thick weat And it was soon clear that had we run down upon land, our safety would have depended entirely upon chance of very nicely hitting the entrance of the po for such was the violence of the wind during the ni that we could not keep even the course of the coast; a when the next day broke, we were not able, by reas of the thickness of the atmosphere and the uncertain of the currents, to tell how near we were to the iron bound shores that were under our lee.

From this time we were alternately running upo the land, and hauling off under storm sails, just as th almost incessant gales and the direction of the wind favoured or opposed us. We had even a second time view of the entrance of our port, and were again driven off. Twice during this period of uncertain and tempestuous weather, we were lying to under the close-reefed main topsail; and at one time we were by the reckoning no less than 340 miles from the port which we had actually twice seen, and once been so near entering. Such is the uncertainty and such the delight of navigating these seas.

The chief occurrence which varied our every-day experience during this long and tedious struggle with the obstinate elements, was an alarm of no ordinary character, which threatened us with even a worse fate than the wreck and total loss of the ship and all on board upon the rocks so often beneath our lee. One morning, after the cabin had been several times half full of water, and the partitions between the departments were broken to pieces, and the furniture was nearly all destroyed, the

ing placed in a niche, had escaped the general wreck, and were very composedly enjoying a favourable change of weather that had occurred, and the fumes of the *hiboock*, when suddenly a seaman in his shirt entered with a woe-begone countenance to inform us, that, upon turning out of his berth, which was upon the half-deck, he had found the floor so hot that he could not stand upon it without his shoes; and he had rushed to the cabin just as he stood, to convey the awful intelligence of his fears, which he communicated in a few brief words.

Upon receiving this intelligence, our captain, before hastening to the half-deck, as one of less presence of mind might have done, summoned the officers who were on duty to the cabin, and then with admirable coolness issued his orders. To one officer was given the charge to see that all the hatches were so battened down and made tight, that not the smallest portion of air could escape from the hold; and to another was given the order to cause to be drawn from the sea, and handed below, as large a quantity of water as possible.

By the time the officers returned to the deck, the alarm had reached the whole ship, and all became now activity, but without the slightest breach of order. A few moments only elapsed before several casks of water had been filled and secured on the lower deck, and a number of men placed around with buckets of water in hand to await the opening of the hatches for the discovery of the true cause of our fears.

The heat was now so intense here, where the greater part of the officers and crew were gathered, that it was scarcely supportable, though the deck beneath our feet was already wet with sea-water. Yet there was no appearance of smoke, which, if there had been flame,

could not but have appeared somewhere. It was therefore the captain's impression that the heat proceeded solely from the cargo, and had not yet broken into flame. Thus it was above all things necessary to avoid admitting such a current of air upon opening the hatches as to cause the bursting out of flame below, which as there was a quantity of spirits among other things in the hold, would have been instantly attended with the dreaded consequences. All communication between the external air and that between decks was therefore carefully cut off. And it was now a trying moment when the hand was placed to lift the hatch; it would reveal the certainty of our destruction, or fill us with hope, if not assure our safety. The captain and his chief officer stood one on either side of the portion of the hatch to be lifted, while two of the other officers gradually removed the tarpaulin which covered it without any consequences yet appearing. Then the two first-mentioned officers gingerly lifted the portion of the hatch which they held; and the instant the air found a free passage, a damp vapour rushed up, which was so intensely hot as, if possible, to increase the alarm. Prudently, however, the hatches were now still very gradually further opened, and the water withheld. And now after a few minutes the vapour diminished in quantity; and our alarm ceased, and all the injury we suffered after all was a good scorching from the vapour which had proceeded from the lower hold. But it is certainly my impression, that had the hatches been suddenly and fully removed, and those of the upper deck kept open, the rush of air thereby caused would have been followed by the bursting out of flame from the combustible materials in the hold, from which the heat turned out to proceed, that would have been attended with all the consequences which we had dreaded.

As much as possible of the cargo was now hoisted tween decks, and wherever else it could be safely sposed of; and upon examination, it was found that large quantity of rye flour that we had on board, ded no doubt by the spirits which were near it, had eated during the time that the hatches were necessarily osed on account of the long continuance of bad eather; and in an hour or two all went on again as teadily as before.

Among the troubles we experienced during the long uspension of our hopes of gaining the port, was a scarcity of water. The voyage under favourable circumstances ought not to exceed a fortnight. Thus, after three weeks, we were reduced to so small a supply of this necessary of life, that our captain had to put us upon short allowance; and after the thirtieth day, he thought it necessary to reduce this to a most inconvenient quantity, and at the same time to communicate his doubts concerning the prudence of our remaining much longer upon the coast, should the same weather continue. This question was, however, one of great difficulty. If we should abandon our attempts to enter the port of Avasha, where were we to find the shelter and relief of which we were in search? One of the Aleutian Islands was the first place of refuge which would naturally occur to a Russian, where the Russo-American Company have a factory. But to leave a port to which we were so near for another in a similar climate, and from which we were at least three weeks' sail, when we had not water enough for ten days more, without immediately reducing the allowance to the smallest quantity upon which we could subsist, was not a step to be hastily taken. In the meantime, a few days' longer delay would render it impossible that the step could upon any account be had recourse to with any chance of success.

There was, however, still another course possible and for which there was at least a precedent. Only a year or two ago, the annual ship making the same voyage from Siberia, found herself in the same position with regard to the weather and the season, although she had still a sufficient quantity of water on board; and after striving against the tempests until all hope was abandoned by her commander, she bore up for the Bonin group of islands in the latitude of 27 degrees and after wintering in one of these made good her voyage in the spring. This was, however, a much longer passage than that to the Aleutian Islands, and offered proportionably less hopes, on account of our want being that of an absolute necessary of our existence. All things thus weighed, therefore, it was determined to persevere to the utmost in our struggles to gain the port of Kamtschatka.

At length, upon the fifteenth day after that upon which we obtained the first sight of the Bay of Avasha, we saw the mountains above mentioned for the third time, now quite covered with snow, at the distance of fifty-three miles, bearing nearly due west of us. The wind was northerly, and the circumstances were deemed so favourable, that we made all sail a third time directly towards the haven of our hopes; and in the evening we were within ten miles of the entrance into the bay, when the wind drew out, but without any such change of weather as to endanger our hopes of maintaining our position during the night.

Before this day closed, we found ourselves in company with another ship, which was evidently a whaler, and which we passed upon the opposite tack; for she was striving like ourselves to gain the entrance of the bay. This was to me a most welcome incident; for considering the time we had been out, and the length of the ship's previous long passage, I had but faint hopes of

on which I knew all my hopes depended of escape m the peninsula before the setting in of the winter. After tacking several times during the night, we und ourselves in precisely the same position the ext morning that we had been in at sun-set the previous ening; and the weather being still fine, we continued beat up towards the port until mid-day, when it ell calm. At one o'clock, however, a fine breeze ame in from the sea, and with all sail set we entered he narrow passage leading to the bay, which we found mere gut, as it had appeared at a distance, between mountainous table lands on both sides. The whaler, which we had missed in the morning, had beaten in, or been favoured by the wind, and entered the gut before it was well day. But she had been caught by a breeze that came from the bay, and had anchored in the gut; and she now got under weigh again, as she took the breeze that we brought up with us.

At two o'clock, we passed three rocks called the Three Brothers, rising above the surface of the water on the right hand, as high probably as our topmasts; and after these, we passed also a rock on the opposite side of the gut, called the Grandmother.

The winds were light, and they became less favourable as we proceeded. But as soon as we had passed through the gut, the fine Bay of Avasha opened before us. This bay is about ten miles in breadth; and within it at its north-west side, there is a little inner port, where now appeared the Russian seat of the government of Kamtschatka, Petropavlovski (or the town of St. Peter and Paul), off which we anchored early in the night after our passage of thirty-six days, during more than half of which we had been exposed to the most tempestuous weather.

In concluding the account of this protracted voyage,

I will only add, that I left the Irtysch with a stro impression of the superior skill and seaman-like qualiti of the Russian officers on board, and with admirati of the perfect discipline that was maintained witho recourse to severity. After having been accustomed t voyages in almost every description of vessel, with a without that essential instrument, the chronometer, I am able to say that I was never on board a ship whe the results of the reckoning without a chronometer were more precise than on this occasion.

It is impossible to speak, however, in the same term of the seamanship of the men generally on board. About half a dozen of them, who were accustomed like the officers to the navigation of these seas, were, as far as I was able to judge, equal to any, save the best of our own seamen, with whom I have sailed; but the rest, the greater portion of whom had marched from the Black Sea, and had been three years on their journey, were the worst I ever sailed with. Our chief officer, Chudinoff, who added the qualifications of an artist to those of his profession, before I left Kamtschatka, presented me with a drawing of some of the Kurile Isles, which he had made during our passage.

## CHAP. XXX.

### KAMTSCHATKA—PETROPAVLOVSKI.

Position of the Peninsula.—Most remarkable natural Features.—Volcanic Mountains.—Rivers.—Animals.—Climate of Kamtschatka.—Government.—Bay of Avasha.—Grand Views.—Landing of the Passengers.—Safe Harbour.—Government-house.—Interview with the Commandant.—Gospojah Machin.—State of Solitude.—Effect on a St. Petersburgh Lady.—Captain Knox.—American Store.—Dinner at the Commandant's.—The two Ships enter the inner Port.—The American Whaler.—Relief of Suspense.—Arrangements.—Anglo-Kamtschadale.—Difference between Russian and Italian *Fêtes*.—Russian *Fête* kept for Exchange of Rings.—Grand Duke Constantine and the Duchess.—Dinner at Government-house.—A Step worthy to be imitated by our Admiralty.

KAMTSCHATKA comprises the whole of that great peninsula which stretches out from the coast of Asia at its north-eastern extremity, and is washed by the Pacific Ocean on the east and the Sea of Ochotsk on the west. It lies between the 51st and 64th degree of north latitude, and between the 155th and 164th of east longitude. It is between 700 and 800 miles in length, and about 250 in breadth at its centre near the latitude of 55 degrees, but not above eighty or ninety at either of its extremities. The most remarkable natural features of this great peninsula are its volcanic mountains, which rise at intervals throughout a vast range, which stretches from its southern to its northern extremity, and appears to be but a continuation of the volcanic range which forms the Kurile Islands, and extends even to Japan and the islands along the eastern coasts of the Asiatic continent. It has only

one navigable river, called the Kamtschatka, which falls into the Sea of Kamtschatka near the centre of the peninsula, but it has many less considerable streams. The coasts and all the rivers of Kamtschatka abound in fish and water-fowl. The sea is frequented by whales of several species, and by walruses and seals in great abundance, besides cod and herring; and in the rivers are found great quantities of salmon. Geese and ducks, also, of several species frequent the coasts and the rivers during the autumn and spring in great numbers.

The peninsula is inhabited by three aboriginal tribes, the Kamtschadales, the Kouriaks, and the Ohlutors. The first of these occupy the southern, and the other two the northern districts of the country. But the whole of the native population is not supposed to exceed 4000 or 5000 souls.

The climate of Kamtschatka is much milder than that of the continent in the same parallel of latitude, owing, without doubt, to the influence of the sea on both sides of it. The maximum of cold in the southern districts does not exceed 20 degrees.

The country politically forms a part of the government of Ochotsk, and is comprehended within the grand province of Eastern Siberia. Its capital town is called Petropavlovski, or the town of St. Peter and St. Paul, and is seated in the Bay of Avasha. The government of the peninsula at the time I visited the country, was administered by Captain Machin of the imperial navy. Its chief provincial towns or villages are Bolschiretsk, Tiguilsk, Nijhni Kamtschatka, and Verchnei Kamtschatka.

When the passengers on board the Irtysch came on deck on the morning after our arrival in port, we found the captain had left the ship at an early hour, to deliver his despatches to the governor or com-

mandant, and report the passengers and freight which he had brought with him, previous to our landing, which left us at leisure to take a particular survey of the harbour of Avasha, and the surrounding scenery.

The view which is here presented to the eye of the spectator far surpasses in magnificence any thing that is to be seen throughout the mountain districts of Siberia. The nearer lands around consist of rude and barren hills; but at a greater or less distance within thirty versts, appear the mountains already mentioned, while not the sign of the existence of men in any state of society, or of the means of their subsistence, is to be seen throughout the vast extent of country under view, save only a little assemblage of a dozen or two of black huts set, apparently, at the very base of the volcanic mountain of Avasha, from the crater of which was now issuing a column of white vapour.

The highest of these remarkable mountains, and that which is the most conspicuous when they are viewed from the sea, is called by the natives Karatski (the Giant), in Russian Villikanin. It appears from this point, as if it rose immediately from the shores upon the opposite side of the bay, whereas its base is at a distance of thirty versts from the place where we lay. The name of the second is Velutchink, and of the third Avasha.

On our captain's return, he informed me, that he had presented the letter which I brought with me to the commandant, among others, and that he was commissioned to tell me that apartments would be immediately prepared for my reception during my stay, in one of several small buildings set apart for the accommodation of the officers of the station, and that the commandant wished to see me on shore as soon as possible.

The five passengers now descended to the ship's boat, well pleased to leave the storm-beaten Irtysch; for though nothing could be better than the gallant manner in which she had weathered the gales, the anxieties of the passage had been greatly augmented by the uncertainty which we had been under during the last sixteen days, whether we should reach the port, or have to bear up, after all, for some distant country.

We found the inner harbour, as we rowed up it, perhaps the most perfect little haven that is to be met with on the coast of any country in the world. It is formed by a peninsula of elevated land, which stretches out into the noble bay, and makes the harbour by approaching at its extremity within 200 or 300 yards of the opposite land. But again, even within this, there projects from the main land a bank of sand and pebbles, which forms a third harbour within the second, with a narrow passage to enter, but with depth of water to admit vessels of any burden, and capable probably of containing fifty or sixty large ships at anchor at the same time.

We landed at the bottom of this harbour, at a little fort, belonging to which were some storehouses. My fellow-passengers now made their way towards the apartments that had been severally assigned to them, to wait for the ordinary hour to attend on the commandant, while I took my road immediately to the government-house, in order to respond as early as possible to the invitation which had reached me while on board the vessel.

On arriving at the government-house, I found a low but neat wooden building, with a garden in front of it, where the humble birch stood in the place of fruit trees. Upon gaining admittance, I was shown through several doors similar to those which enclose the tenants of the Siberian houses, to the audience apartment of

trance of a stranger, soon appeared.

My reception from the remote representative of s sovereign was polite and warm, and was accom-nied with the offer of his aid in every object I might ve in view. After a short conversation concerning e voyage and its several incidents, and upon the news e-brought from Siberia and Europe, the commandant onducted me to an inner apartment, and introduced ie to his wife, from whom also I met a kind reception. 'he lady was a native of St. Petersburg, and she was leased with the opportunity of conversing with one so ately, as something more than a year appeared to her, rom her native town. She had married very young, and iad now been between four and five years in Kamt-ichatka. All I was able, however, to communicate to her only amounted to a traveller's passing impression of the modern capital of Russia, and must have been of little value. On the other hand, the lady could not fail to excite great interest in a stranger, from the solitude in which she was residing.

She was still in the very bloom of youth; and with no ordinary degree of beauty, she possessed all the accomplishments common to the more refined portion of her sex in Europe, which served but to heighten the contrast between the daughter of civilisation, and the women of this rude and inhospitable land. Taken so young from the contracted confines within which continental delicacy coops up the younger portion of her sex before the matrimonial alliance, and brought here by sea, the knowledge which she had acquired concerning the world wore more the air of romance than reality. She made no secret of her feelings. She said that for the first two years after her arrival at Kamtschatka, the *ennui* which she suffered had been scarcely supportable; but that since that time, habit

and the occupation which two children gave her, had not only reconciled her to the country, but had even made her now look with something like regret to the time of the commandant's recall to fill some other post.

Before I took leave, I learned from the commandant that an American trading vessel that had visited this port for several seasons, had this year left her master Mr. Knox behind, who had established a little general store for the purpose, more particularly, of trading with the natives in the interior of the country; and after receiving an invitation to return to dinner, I was now conducted by one of the commandant's servants in search of Mr. Knox at his little American store, in hopes of being able to obtain the information which was so important to me, respecting the whaler that entered the port with us, and was now at anchor in the bay.

On my arrival at Mr. Knox's, I found the master of the whaler had already been on shore. The ship proved to be the Josephine, Captain Hedges, of New Bedford; and I found to my great satisfaction, that she was bound to the Sandwich Islands, the very place to which I was most desirous of prosecuting my travels, and that she was to sail as soon as she had refreshed her crew by one or two weeks' repose, and procured wood and water, which were chiefly the objects for which she had entered the port. After this, I was conducted to the quarters provided for me, where I found a servant already in attendance, with instructions to remain during the time of my stay.

On my return to the commandant's at the dinner-hour that had been named, I found Captain Rudakoff already there, and some of the *chinovnik* residents in the place. Upon the entrance of the lady, we sat down to a dinner little differing in viands, and nothing in ceremony, from that of the pure Russian repast which has been before the subject of remark. But as the captain had

duties to perform this evening, and my own little affairs required attention, we retired together at an early hour after this our first dinner on shore.

The next morning the Irtysch, as well as the whaler, the only ships in the port, entered the inner harbour; and I went on board the whaler to make the acquaintance of my doubtless future captain for a longer voyage than that which I had just accomplished. The captain was on board; and it was no small relief to me to find the hardy navigator of these cold and stormy regions, a free, open, and thorough sailor. He was much delighted, also, to find that he had the chance of a companion during perhaps another month or two of fishing, as well as during the voyage, which at once relieved me from the anxiety I had felt from the time of leaving Irkoutsk, on account of my being, for the reasons before mentioned, so ill provided with the means of travelling. Our arrangements, therefore, did not cost a moment's time, nor more breath than would have been required to throw a harpoon into one of the monsters of the deep with whose blubber the good ship was nearly loaded.

The next morning at a very early hour, I went in search of another foreigner of my own nation or race. At the dinner at the government-house the day before this, I had been informed that the lady of the commandant was acquainted with the English language. Upon questioning her, however, she informed me that she had been instructed in English at school, but that she had not made much progress in speaking for lack of opportunity, and that she was now afraid to attempt it. But she informed me, that there was an honest man here, whose native tongue at least was English, who had been left behind by a whaler that had put into this port many years since, and who had married a Kamtschadale girl, and had now a grown-up

family, and that she had endeavoured to make some use of him as an instructor. But she said she found his pronunciation so different from that of the master by whom she had been taught at school, that she supposed he must be an American, as she had heard that the Americans spoke the language differently from the English themselves; and in the meantime, as he was not very apt at distinguishing the parts of speech into which philologists divide language, she had not been able to make much use of him.

In search of this man, therefore, not without some curiosity concerning what he might turn out to be, I was now led by my servant to a little dwelling among the scattered huts of the place. As we approached his door, the good man appeared; and while I was full of expectation of hearing some backwoods-man's elegant discourse, behold, quite as elegant a string of cockneyisms of the style of the quarters of London the least frequented by the schoolmaster, and such as would doubtless as much have startled any home-keeping American of one of the Atlantic cities, as they surprised myself at Kamtschatka. The Anglo-Kamtschadale, however, had been a bricklayer before he became a sailor and a wanderer so far.

The next day was a *fête* day among all the civilised inhabitants of the little town. The Russians of every race, and the Italians, notwithstanding the great contrast in their characters generally, which is scarcely exceeded by that of the climates in which they live, have certainly one point of resemblance, which lies in their nearly equal love of holidays or *fêtes*. There is, nevertheless, a remarkable difference in the days and the occasions for which these dissimilar people severally pass their time of rejoicing. If in Italy you inquire what is the occasion of the *fête* you find celebrating by masses, processions of wooden or stone images, and other

appendages to the pomp of Romish worship, you will most probably hear, that it is the day of some wonderful saint that has stood voluntarily chained to the top of a pillar till he died of starvation or the heat of the sun, or of one who enjoyed the somewhat dirty luxury of being eaten up by vermin, or perhaps, of one that flogged himself often and well until he died, and for whom heaven has

> "Open'd wide
> Her ever-during gates
> On golden hinges moving,"

and appointed him to be an intercessor for all penitents, on high. But if you inquire the cause of a *fête* you may happen to find celebrating at any place from one end of this empire to the other, you are almost sure to hear that it is the natal, or wedding, or name's day of some near relation of the parties rejoicing; or, when the holiday is general, of one of the imperial family. The present *fête* was kept to commemorate the exchange of rings between the Grand Duke Constantine, the second son of the reigning Emperor, and the present Grand Duchess, the news of which we brought with us: and the rejoicings indeed on account of the same event I had already witnessed at Irkoutsk.

The commandant gave a dinner on the occasion, at which I had the honour to be a guest; and I had now the pleasure of meeting the deputy or civil governor of Kamtschatka, Gospodin Stetzenkoff, and my fellow-passengers, the officer of artillery and the *ispravnik;* and also several of the *chinovnik* of Petropavlovski. The officers were for the most part from the Black Sea. It may be easily supposed that the service of these coasts is not popular in the Russian navy. Those, however, who engage in it are compensated in a manner our admiralty might do well to imitate. The service is voluntary, and the officers engage for only three

years as a fixed period. During this time they have double pay, and at its termination they receive promotion. If they remain five years, they are allowed a half year's pay for the expenses of returning; and if ten years, they may retire on full pay of the rank they have attained, or continue in the service, and receive a pension equal to their full pay when they quitted the coast, in addition to that of the rank they actually hold.

The governor's dinner was of course a little too much under the influence of official restraint to be very gay; but after retiring for an hour or two, and returning in the evening, according to Russian custom, we had cards, and music and song from the amiable lady of the house, and finally a cheerful supper and the loyal toasts, and such conversation as the time suggested.

## CHAP. XXXI.

KAMTSCHATKA — PETROPAVLOVSKI — *continued.*

Character of the Country.—Capabilities.—Obstacles to Progress. — New Plant for the Production of Cloth.—Encouragement of Native Genius.— Germ of future Commerce.— Schools. — Kamtschadale Tongue. — Aborigines. — Races. — Character. — Compared with other Tribes.—The Tchouktchi, an independent Tribe. — Conjectures concerning them. — Vain Attempts to subdue them.—Little known of them.—Fertile Districts of the Peninsula.— Animals.— Minerals.— Coals.— Hospital. — Monuments at Petropavlovski.—First Snow.—Dog-sledges.— Account of the Kamtschatka Dog.—Resembles the Wolf.— Indigenous Disposition.—Nature.— Use made of the Dog.— Management. —Danger when travelling. — Drive in a Dog-sledge.— The Sledge.—Further Observations concerning the Dog.— Arrival of the Herald.—Captain Kellet's Account of his Voyage.— Opinions concerning Franklin.—The Weather he had experienced.

As I continued to be daily a guest at the government-house, and the character and capabilities of the country, in regard especially to agricultural pursuits, were often discussed, I had the opportunity of obtaining some information on these subjects, as well as of confirming what I heard upon other occasions.

A grand obstacle to the progress of the peninsula in this particular must ever arise from its generally mountainous and sterile character. Very little progress has yet been made in changing the mode of life of the inhabitants generally. The Kamtschadales, however, live in villages like the Russians in winter, when they hunt and procure furs, some of which they exchange with the traders for useful articles, but the most part for *vodka* and tobacco. But in summer many of them

continue still to live more like the independent tribes. At that season they remove to the coasts, where they inhabit fishing stations called *yahkolas*, and live upon any fish they can procure, from the whale cast on shore, to the cod and herring caught by the line and the net.

Yet there are extensive districts that are exceptions in this respect; and the imperial government, advised by several patriotic commandants at this station, has become aware of this, and in conjunction with the Agricultural Society of St. Petersburg, has established two superintendents of agriculture, who travel and distribute seeds sent from Russia, and collect information concerning the condition and capabilities of the country.

On one occasion at the government-house, the commandant, whose interest seemed fully engaged in the advance and prosperity of the country under his government, exhibited a specimen of cloth manufactured by two Kamtschadale girls of the interior of the country, and also some specimens of the plants from which it was made. The cloth was not very fine, but was said to be extremely durable. The plant which furnished the raw material is called *krapeva* by the natives. It very much resembles our stinging nettle, but is of larger growth and of a fibre much stronger. Those which were exhibited were upwards of six feet in length. Specimens of the cloth had already been sent to St. Petersburg; and the agricultural society there had forwarded some rich presents to the two ingenious girls. I could not learn whether the art thus unexpectedly discovered in a land so uncongenial for the growth of any thing springing from original conception, were a relic, as I strongly suspected, of a knowledge of the arts once more widely spread, when the country may have been more populous, or whether it were an extraordinary instance of modern Kamtschadale genius.

At any rate, it may be hoped that it is the incipient germ of a staple of commerce, hereafter to develope the resources of the country, which the states now springing into existence around the Pacific Ocean, and the increase of the trading of the Chinese must eventually produce.

There are two rivers in Kamtschatka in which oysters and mussels are found, and some pearls. The governor on this occasion exhibited several of the pearls, but they were not remarkable for size or form. These rivers are the Goligninor, which proceeds from a small lake near the southern point of the peninsula, and the Outkator, which lies further north.

The government has not been unmindful that moral culture, if it do not precede, must at least march hand in hand with material progress of any kind; and the true elements of proper civilisation, the means of instruction, have been afforded the natives of the southern districts of the peninsula. Two schools have in effect been established; one at Milkova, 320 versts from Petropavlovski, and the other at Clutchifskoi, 600 versts from the capital. And besides these there are no less than eight other small schools for young children, attached to the same number of churches, which have been erected and endowed in different parts of the country.

The Russians of Kamtschatka have not imbibed the inclination and taste of their countrymen at Yakoutsk for the tongue of the natives of the country they inhabit, and these schools are all expressly for the instruction of the Kamtschadale boys only in the Russian language, and, through that means, in other branches of general knowledge.

At Petropavlovski there is only a small marine school, and the boys are chiefly Russians, or of the mixed race. The master of this establishment has a

salary of 115 silver rubles a year, with a retirement of half-pay at the end of six years, or on full pay at the end of twelve years. The following are Kamtschadal words:—

God, *Ducetaschutch; Chinovnik, Herme;* Sun or Moon, *Khiht* (very guttural); Boy, *Patch;* Man, *Tatach;* River, *Keeiche.*

The extreme poverty of the language may be gathered from its having but one term for the sun and the moon; but still more from the circumstance that it has scarcely any names for fish or birds, which are merely distinguished by the moon in which they are most plentiful. Almost all words end with the sound formed by the syllable *iche.*

Several of the officers stationed here had been in the northern and mid-districts of the peninsula, and they unreservedly communicated to me all the observations they had had the opportunity of making concerning both the natives and the capabilities of the country. Their accounts did not differ in any thing essential from those generally given by ancient travellers in Kamtschatka. They informed me, however, that a second tribe called Ohlutors, numbering about 1000 souls, in addition to the Kouriaks, inhabit the northern districts, which have therefore been placed among the native tribes mentioned in a previous page. Their mode of life and their customs are similar to those of the Kouriaks. Both live without settled habitations, like the Tungouse, and subsist wholly by hunting, and their sole beast of burden is the reindeer. They pay a small *yasae* in furs to the Russian government; but, save in this formality, they may be still considered as independent tribes. I saw none of either of them; but from all I heard, I am disposed to believe that in feature they equally resemble the Tungouse; but they are declared to be

a much less docile disposition. Captain Rudakoff, ho had visited all parts of the shores of the sea of )chotsk, informed me that the Russians who, with ome Kamtschadales, were settled at the little town of Tighilsh, for the purpose of trading with the natives, were occasionally greatly troubled to keep at peace with them; and that during a winter which he himself spent at a little fortress, fifteen versts north of the small settlement called Ijiginsk, at the head of the gulf of the same name, consisting of only 150 men and 250 women, he was obliged to be continually on the guard. Moreover, during the season at which they came to exchange their furs, he could only keep at peace by showing himself always ready for hostilities.

The more southern inhabitants, as well in the features of the face as in the mode of their lives, seem rather to resemble the Yakoutes. The men, as with that tribe, are not much troubled with the appendage to the proper features of the face which grows with such luxuriance upon the chins of the Russians; and I was informed by Russians who had seen some of the Kurilians of the islands, that the men of that tribe are equally deficient in this ornament of the human countenance.

Such differences as appear in the customs and manners of the Yakoutes and the Kamtschadales probably arise from the mere accident of position. The Yakoutes inhabit generally a plain and grazing country, where, notwithstanding the extreme rigour of the climate, they are able to keep cattle; whereas, the Kamtschadales dwell in a mountainous country, and their means of subsistence are chiefly fish and the oily amphibious animals with which their coasts and rivers abound.

In regard to the northern and southern inhabitants of Kamtschatka, the mere circumstance of their using two dissimilar animals for their beasts of burden, has doubtless tended to produce the difference apparent in

their characters—the Kouriaks and Ohlutors employing, as above mentioned, the reindeer; and the Kamtschadales, dogs. Nor could they occupy or roam over the same territory, as the dog of Kamtschatka destroys and devours the deer with the same voracity as the wolf.

Many conjectures have been formed concerning the races to which the native inhabitants of the peninsula belong; but if what has just been said, be considered in connection with many previous remarks concerning the tribes of the continent, it will scarcely fail to convince every one that the Kamtschadales, in common with the Bouriats and Yakoutes, belong to the Mongolian family, and the Kouriaks and the Ohlutors to the same race as the Tungouse; and that the three last-named tribes have a common origin with the aborigines of North America.

There is, however, yet another, if not two more, remarkable tribes inhabiting, and possessing independently the whole of that country which lies north-east of the peninsula, and is bounded on the north, the east, and the south-east by the Arctic Sea, Behring Straits, and the Sea of Kamtschatka. Not much is known concerning them. The inhabitants generally of continental Siberia believe them to be a branch of the family of the Esquimohs; but I heard no reason given for this opinion. It seems most probable that they have a common origin also with the tribes of the north-west coast of America. They have generally been termed by the Russians simply the Tchouktchi. In fact, not much more was known with certainty until lately, than that they are a brave and independent people, who have resisted every attempt to subdue them, or to pass through their territory. Some years since, the Russians sent 200 armed soldiers into their country, rather upon an exploring expedition than with any definite views of conquest. Not a man, however,

eturned; nor has any thing transpired that might lead o a solution of the mystery attending their loss. But as the Tchouktchi are known to be warlike, and skilful in the use of the bow, there is little doubt that the Russians were destroyed to a man. Nevertheless, they occasionally visit the Russian posts to trade with the merchants, where they chiefly exchange mammoths' teeth and skins for tobacco and *vodka*, and this has led to the little knowledge that has been acquired concerning them. They appear to consist of two tribes, one of which is subject to the other. The highest tribe the Russians call the *Sidiatchi* Tchouktchi or Settled Tchouktchi, on account of their being stationary, and the other *Olenny*, or Reindeer, or Travelling Tchouktchi. The mode of life of a people confined to a climate so rigorous, with scarcely any commerce with strangers, must doubtless be such as would greatly interest us, could we depend upon what we might hear.

Several of my friends had visited the most fertile part of the peninsula in the mid-districts. They described it as comprising an extensive valley, lying for the most part between two ranges of hills, and watered by the River Kamtschatka. Here the soil is composed of fine mould, similar to that which we have seen prevailing in Siberia; and its natural productions are abundant, consisting of all the varieties of the fir and the birch, of a finer growth than any to be found in the same latitude upon the Asiatic continent. It was the general opinion, that all this part of the country would produce hemp, flax, and the principal culinary vegetables. Ships of 100 tons' burden may advance 200 versts up the river which here fertilises the country. Raspberries, strawberries, whortleberries, currants, and cranberries, abound also in the same district. There is likewise much grass in the lower lands; and many

forest trees flourish on the drier soils, such as larch, poplar, willow, cedar, and juniper.

The wild animals most abounding in the peninsula are, bears, lynxes, sea and river otters, reindeer, foxes of different colours, wolves, and martens or sables. The natives exchange annually about 30,000 of the skins with the Russian traders, for various articles of merchandise. Ducks, geese, and other birds of passage, are plentiful in spring and autumn.

Of the fish with which the rivers abound, salmon of several kinds is the most remarkable. One sort, called *krasnee* (red) by the natives, is commonly taken from three to four feet in length; and another called *garbooscha* (hump-backed) is equally abundant. Herrings are as plentiful in spring and autumn, as upon the coasts of Europe and America. Smelts are likewise plentiful at the same season. There is also another fish called *vachnia*, about the size of a herring, and of excellent quality, as I am able to say and well remember from having received a present of a large basket full from Gospojah Machin at the moment of my departure, and which we found a true luxury on board the whaler.

There is little doubt that the peninsula is rich in mineral deposits, but it has been very imperfectly explored. The natives are said to know of districts which abound in the precious metals, but which they judge it prudent to conceal, lest it should tend to increase the number of the Russians in their country, and by and by lead, as they seem to have a somewhat obscure presentiment, to their being forced to labour in the mines. That districts of the country abound in iron ore there can be no doubt. Captain Vassillief informed me, that perfect iron sand was found in the vicinity of Nijhni Kamtschatka, with which he was well acquainted. Coals are, probably, also abundant.

n great quantities, and of good quality, in the vicinity of Tighilsk in the Sea of Ochotsk, to which he had made several voyages. Some that I saw at the government-house at Petropavlovski were, however, hard and indifferent.

I was politely conducted over the hospital here by the commandant, in company with the government medical superintendent. It was an establishment upon precisely the same footing as that at Ochotsk. I must here mention, however, that the peculiar complaint prevailing in Siberia, of which the symptoms and effects have been particularly noticed, does not exist upon this peninsula.

Petropavlovski possesses two humble monuments to the memory of two of the earliest navigators who visited this bay, the unfortunate De la Perouse and Behring. I visited them in company with my friend Captain Rudakoff. They were both erected by the Russians. That to the memory of Behring consists of a metal obelisk about eight feet in height. It was sent from St. Petersburgh, and has been placed in the garden attached to the government-house, and is protected by a railing. That to the memory of La Perouse is similar in design to the other, but is of wood and is higher. It stands upon an elevated part of the neck of land which has been mentioned as forming the proper harbour, and facing the bay, and is protected by iron railings. It was erected by the Governor of Kamtschatka soon after the visit of Petit Tours. But, strange to say, there is no memorial of Cook.

Upon the 3rd of October (our 15th), the first snow fell that covered the ground, and upon the 4th, the dog-sledges, called *nartees* by the inhabitants, to the great joy of the Kamtschadales and also of their dogs, which filled the air with their howlings of exultation,

began to enliven the lonely little seat of government of the vast country which the peninsula comprises.

The Kamtschatka dog has already been mentioned in the account of the latter part of the land journey in Siberia, where he first came under my observation; but as this remarkable animal is not there found in the perfection of his nature, it was considered better to postpone all that it might be thought necessary to say concerning his character and qualifications until our arrival in the peninsula, where he entirely supplies the place of the horse elsewhere, and where all his useful qualities are better developed, better known, and more appreciated.

This remarkable and valuable animal must be considered as indigenous in this country, where he is found roving wild upon the hills, and subsisting in precisely the same manner as the wolf. In his nature, both physically and in respect to his temper and disposition, he seems about equally to resemble that tameless animal and the mastiff; yet not precisely in the manner that might be supposed to arise from the cross breed of the two species, but rather as possessing some of the qualities of the one and of the other, neither confounded nor modified, but distinctly marked, and perhaps in equal perfection to the same qualities possessed severally by those animals. He is about the ordinary size of the mastiff, and his colour is usually buff or silver grey, with the several darker or lighter shades of these colours as an invariable basis. The form of his body is like that of the mastiff; but his head more nearly resembles that of the wolf. His ears stand up in the same manner, and are of the same form as those of the wolf. But it is in the eye, and the character of the sense of which this feature is the organ, and in the habits which this engenders, and in his disposition, that the dog of Kamtschatka most distinctly resembles the

wolf. Like his fellow-rover, he sleeps more by day than by night, and he sees better by the little light afforded by the stars or the moon than by the light of the sun; which has given rise to the same vulgar error concerning his vision, which is not unknown among ourselves regarding the cat, that he can see in the dark.

If there be any exception to the distinct manner in which the dog of Kamtschatka possesses the character and qualities of the two animals to which we have compared him, it is in regard to his voice, which is heard in loud cries, and undistinguishable sounds, between the bark and the howl of both those animals.

In respect, more particularly, to his disposition, and what may be termed his moral qualities, he may be pronounced to be very intelligent in all that regards the labour in which he is engaged, very eager to work, and obedient, like the canine species generally, to one master alone, but without being susceptible of that kind of attachment which more or less in all other species of the dog, enables us to sympathise with them, and even sometimes excites in us a degree of friendship which not every one of our own species is able to inspire us with. Thus, every pack or team of dogs must be always driven by the same hand and guided by the same voice, which the whip, and not caresses, has taught them to remember and obey.

The dog with these qualities becomes in this country a very serviceable animal. Whatever, indeed, our horses and bullocks perform for us, if we except carrying us on their backs and ploughing our arable land, the dogs perform for the Kamtschadales. There is, however, little employment for them in summer; at which season they are allowed to range about and get their food, which they generally find in the rivers, in the best manner they can. Some pains are at all times

required to keep them in good temper and at peace with their neighbours, both human and of their own species. All who keep a team have near their houses, when the snow is on the ground, either stakes driven into the earth, or poles set up just in the same manner that they are placed to form the frame of a wigwam, to which the dogs are attached singly or in pairs. But it is necessary that, whenever they are paired, whether, indeed, at the stakes or in harness, that those which are put together should be not only of the same family, but of the same litter, or at least that they should have been paired since they were puppies. The greater part of them it is at no time safe to leave loose. The younger dogs are said to be the most dangerous in this way. They will not only kill domestic fowls at all times (which cannot, therefore, be kept by the Kamtschadales), and dogs of the smaller species that may chance to be brought to the place, but they have been known to destroy children. While they do not work, they are tolerably fed, and have usually an allowance of half a dried salmon, or a portion weighing about two pounds a day; but when they labour they are worse treated and more stinted than the Siberian horses, and are only given half the quantity of food they receive when at rest; yet they will under this treatment perform journeys of three or four weeks' duration with much less repose than the horse would require. Nay, they will even upon a journey of four or five days, work for fourteen or sixteen hours out of the twenty-four without tasting any food whatsoever, and without appearing to suffer any diminution of strength; and the universal opinion is, that the less food they receive on this side starvation when travelling, the better.

There were probably about eight or ten of these packs or trains of dogs at Petropavlovski at this time, numbering from seven to fifteen dogs in each, for the

umber in a train is always uneven. The reason of his arrangement is, that the most intelligent dog of the pack is selected as a leader, and runs alone, and is guided solely by the voice of the driver, or *kyourschik*, as he is termed by the natives, without any use of reins, and the rest follow him. But on some occasions they become wholly unmanageable, which renders it dangerous to travel with them. This, however, is chiefly in the country in which the deer abounds, where they are not often used. Such is their love for the flesh of the deer, that they are said to smell that animal even at the distance of two versts; and whenever they get this incentive to the chase, they start off, and perhaps leave their driver, and whomsoever he may be conducting, to perish in the snow.

Upon this first day of sledging this season, the commandant politely sent me his *nartee* and his *kyourschik* with a train of fifteen dogs, to make a little excursion by way of trying this method of travelling. The *nartee* is a long, light, little sledge, appearing at first sight as much too long as the Siberian ordinary *sani* is too short; and its seat is not higher than fifteen or eighteen inches from the ground, and it very rarely carries more than one person besides the driver. It is by no means a comfortable vehicle, on account of its affording no shelter, and no means of reclining; for which, indeed, it could not be adapted without more inconvenience than advantage, on account of the constant upsets to which the traveller is exposed, owing to there being no beaten tracks or roads, and but a very little level ground in the country.

Having seated myself upon this frail little carriage, which had only a light frame back, and which luxury is not, indeed, a necessary part of the national sledge, the *kyourschik* placed himself in front, just as a lady sits her horse, with a stout stick in his

hands, about five feet in length, which was not, as a stranger might suppose, for beating or terrifying the dogs, but to keep the sledge from upsetting. This part of the duty of the driver, indeed, is in general a most laborious occupation, as much owing to the perpetual obstructions which the sledge encounters, and the unevenness of the ground, as to its liability to upset, on account of its own great length in proportion to its breadth.

Among the better qualities of the Kamtschatka dog, has been mentioned his willingness and even eagerness to labour. But this partly, perhaps, arises from his being, at least at this season, too full of rest, and from the less restraint which he finds from his harness when at work, than from his chain when at the stake. The sight of one of these sledges in motion is, indeed, a sight so agreeable to the eyes of those at the stake, and the dogs in it are subjects of such envy, that wherever it appears it is the signal for a howl of exultation and hope, which spreads from pack to pack among all the dogs in the place, until the whole amphitheatre within which the town is seated, resounds with the canine halloo. Thus, from this hour until I left Petropavlovski, the voice and peculiar howl of the Kamtschadale dog rang perpetually in our ears.

Our little tour upon this occasion was by the lake already mentioned at the back of the town, and which I had before visited on foot; and, deducting the upsets, which were owing to the too great freshness of the dogs than to want of skill in the driver, or to either of the inconveniences above mentioned, the promenade was as agreeable as it was novel.

At day-break, the day after the first fall of snow, we were all surprised by the sight of another ship in the bay, which was presently known to be Her Majesty's discovery ship the Herald, Captain Kellet, which had

been in search of Sir John Franklin and his companions, and had been before in this port at an earlier period of the season. I lost no time in going off to her, and I found Captain Kellet on board. The enterprising and gallant officer was surprised to meet a fellow-countryman at Kamtschatka, and politely communicated to me all he had experienced that was in any way remarkable during his long search beyond the Straits of Behring, and his conjectures concerning the ships and their crews, which we still look for in vain.

Every one is too well acquainted with all that has been done and surmised concerning our regretted countrymen, to render it necessary to make more than a short reference here to the information I received from the captain. He informed me that he had pursued his search until obstructed by the ice; after which, he had deposited provisions upon different parts of the desert coast of the American continent, and set up signal posts at conspicuous points, to attract and direct the adventurers to the spots where they might get relief, in case they should happily reach the open sea. And he had now entered this harbour a second time, in the faint hope that the lost ships might have attained this place of refuge, as well as to leave the remainder of the supplies with which he was charged, in case they might hereafter make their appearance. Captain Kellet was at this time, however, of opinion that they had returned eastward; and he did not despair of hearing something of them upon his arrival upon the western coast of America, to which he was bound.

The weather he had experienced during the whole of the summer in the seas he had been navigating, had been such as he had not expected, and the accounts he gave of it much surprised myself as well as my companions of the voyage from continental Siberia. Upon

leaving San Blas, on the western coast of Mexico, early in the past spring, he had prepared his ship for the storms which he expected to encounter in the higher latitudes; but from that time up to the hour of his arrival at this port, he had had no stronger winds than stiff breezes, to which he could carry his double-reefed topsails, with the top-gallant sails over them; while we had experienced a series of gales in much lower latitudes, which endured for nearly half the thirty-five days that we were at sea.

Before I left the Herald, Captain Kellet, finding my intended movements might prevent me again seeing him, politely gave me at once a frank invitation to accompany him on his return to the coast of America, but which I was induced to decline, partly on account of his early departure, which would have deprived me of my intended excursion into the interior of the country, and partly that I wished to visit the group of islands to which the whaler was bound.

## CHAP. XXXII.

### KAMTSCHATKA — PARATUNKA.

Passage of the Bay of Avasha.—Landing.—Ancient Forest.—Narrow Lakes.—A Russian Family.—Admiral Ricord's Means of civilising the Natives.—Intermarriages.—Stay the Night.—Renewal of our Journey.—River Paratunka,—A civilised Kamtschadale.—Drive in a Dog-sledge.—Arrival at the Mineral Pools.—Account of our Host.—Other Plans of Admiral Ricord.—Account of our Hostess.—Kamtschadale Girl transformed into an English Lady.—The Mineral Pools.—Their Temperature.—Dimensions of the Pools.—Character of the Water.—Supposition concerning its Components.—Baths applied to all Diseases.—Method of taking them.—Captain Vassillief's Method.—Curiosity in Agriculture.—Volcanic Character of the Vicinity.—Earthquakes.—Departure from the Pools alone.

THE part of the country which had been recommended to me for the excursion which I contemplated, was the district of Paratunka, through which a river of the same name flows, and empties itself into the Bay of Avasha. The route necessary to be taken was not obstructed by such natural obstacles as are at this season, in many parts of the peninsula, insurmountable, and it was through a country the most interesting to a stranger in the land, as well as a native, as the future hope of the Kamtschadales of this vicinity, on account of its being the best watered of all the southern districts of their country. There were to be seen also in this direction some mineral springs and pools, which in themselves were described as curious and worth visiting for a few days.

On the morning after my visit to the Herald, Captain

Vassillief, who had volunteered to accompany me on the short expedition, sent word to inform me, that the shallop in which we were to commence our journey by crossing the Bay of Avasha, was prepared; and at an early hour we set sail for the opposite side of the bay.

The wind was light and unfavourable, when we issued from the snug little inner port of Petropavlovski, and our craft was with difficulty worked into the centre of the broad waters, where we were becalmed for several hours: but we had before our eyes the magnificent scenery above noticed, and we scarcely regretted our detention. Early in the afternoon a light breeze carried us to the entrance of a sheltered inlet, though it failed us when we wanted about two versts of the shore, which obliged us to anchor.

We now landed, in a small canoe which the shallop carried upon her deck, on a lonely beach, with three Kamtschadales whom we had brought for our guides, and a part of our effects, consisting chiefly of provisions. From this, we directed our steps on foot, towards a chain of small and narrow lakes, where some natives living in the vicinity had had especial notice sent them by the commandant some days since to meet us that afternoon with a canoe.

Our path lay here through a forest of birches and limes, which though stunted in height, consisted of trunks and branches of large dimensions; but it was chiefly remarkable, on account of the great age which the trees exhibited. It particularly attracted my attention; for though familiar with the virgin forest from an early age, the wood of similar character, on a narrow track in eastern Siberia, was the only instance of the kind I had before seen. Wherever else I have had opportunities of making any observations, the trees have appeared as if they no sooner attained their full growth, than they rapidly gave place

to others that were rising around them. Here, however, nothing was rising, but all seemed aged, yet with but little appearance of decay; and the captain informed me that this was the character of the greater part of the forests in the peninsula.

Though the distance to the lakes did not exceed two versts, the way was so much interrupted by brambles and underwood, that we were as many hours in passing it. Thus it was full night before we reached the bounds of the wood; and it would have been impossible for us to proceed, had not the snow which was upon the ground aided the little light which a few dim stars afforded. When we issued from among the trees, we found very little increase of light to direct our steps. We now, however, hailed with shrill Indian voices, to ascertain whether the canoe which we expected, was waiting; and we were soon answered by a diligent Kamtschadale, who had been in attendance during the whole day.

The little craft in which we here embarked, was made of a single log of timber, and was very narrow, and not very long, and somewhat inconvenient for our party. As we pushed from the shore, there was scarcely light enough to distinguish the tops of the trees which bordered the narrow lake. After passing through several guts and similar lakes, which occupied us three hours, we landed and crossed a piece of cleared land laid out in pasture, which brought us to a rough log house, where we found quarters for the rest of the night.

The good people here were one of several families of the Russian peasant class, which had been brought to the country by Admiral Ricord, when Governor of Kamtschatka, for the purpose of making a beginning in the good work of mingling the Russian and Kamtschadale blood, as an essential step towards civilising the native population of the peninsula. Marriages, indeed, had even frequently, previous to this time, taken place

between the two races. They had been, however, chiefly confined to Russian sailors, and occasionally their officers at Petropavlovski, and now and then a pope, taking young Kamtschadale girls for their wives, which had done nothing towards introducing industrious habits and spreading the arts of civilised life among the native population.

Our hosts for this night gave us a room apart from that occupied by themselves; and we lay down upon the accustomed forest substitute for beds, good fresh spruce boughs — often much more welcome to the traveller upon his journey than swan's down at home — and passed a very comfortable night.

The next day we rose with the first dawn, took tea, and cakes which the good woman of the house had made from some flour we brought with us; after which, we renewed our journey.

A short walk now brought us to the River Paratunka, where we found a more civilised Kamtschadale than I had yet seen, also waiting for us, like the last, in consequence of a notice he had received from the commandant, with a canoe to aid our passage of the stream, and with a *nartee* and train of dogs to transport us to his abode at the mineral pools.

We found the Paratunka here a rapid stream of about seventy or eighty yards in width, and bordered on both sides by an aged forest resembling that through which we had passed upon the preceding evening.

As soon as we had crossed the river, the dogs, eleven in number, which had been tied to separate trees, were attached in pairs to the sledge; and leaving our spare baggage to the Kamtschadales that had hitherto kept with us, to transport on their backs, we set off, under the conduct of our new guide, at full speed upon a path which he had kept open over an even plain, with nothing to obstruct our way, and with the remains of

coarse grass lying mingled with the snow, and forming quite a wall of two or three feet in height on both sides.

As the distance to the Kamtschadale's abode did not exceed four versts, it was very soon accomplished. Upon our arrival, the hostess met us at the door with a smiling face, that had been handsome, though the cheek-bones might have appeared too high or prominent to those who had not become accustomed to the features of the Eastern races, from some one of which the Kamtschadales unquestionably spring. Her figure was also such as in any part of Europe would be esteemed lady-like; and she was dressed in a printed cotton gown, of European manufacture of course, and not made unlike those worn a few years since by our ladies in the early part of the day.

It was our intention to consider this our head quarters, from which we might make some short excursions during our stay in this vicinity. As the house consisted of two apartments, one of these was appointed for our sole use; and as soon as we were established and alone, the captain gratified my curiosity by an account of our host and hostess, which I must here report.

As the Kamtschadales are indebted to Admiral Ricord for the introduction of the Russian peasants for the purpose of mingling the races, so also are they indebted to the same benefactor for the means of making a first step towards whatever degree of civilisation they may hereafter prove capable of attaining. That enlightened and patriotic commander while in command here sent three Kamtschadale boys to Moscow to receive a liberal education, with the intention of placing the instruction of the youths of the country in their hands on their return. Gospodin Lazarief, our present host, was one of these. Unfortunately, however, in his case the admiral's be-

nevolent intentions were not successful; for with the learning and the good manners which he imbibed in Europe, he unhappily contracted the crying vice of the Russians, the love of the *vodka*, which is seen in its worst features wherever there is a moderate degree of education, as has often been shown in the examples which we have met with in other parts of the country. But he was now so completely lost to all self-government, as to have been in mercy banished from Petropavlovski by the present commandant, and placed in charge of these mineral pools.

Our hostess, who was of the mixed race, had a sister in Europe, whose history is curious and interesting. To those who have not read Captain Cochrane's journal of his travels, it may not be known, that that gallant officer espoused a Kamtschadale young lady, the daughter of a pope of the country. The bride was extremely young; and the captain, on his return to England, whither she accompanied him, placed her at school, and then set off upon fresh travels. After three years he returned again to England, and found that his wife had become quite an English lady, possessed of all the ordinary accomplishments common in good society. Captain Cochrane, however, died soon after this, leaving his young widow all his property; and she afterwards married Captain, now Admiral, Anjou of the imperial navy, who is, I believe, at this time port admiral at Cronstadt. And here it is agreeable to record that, to the honour of this lady, not a post, as her sister informed us, arrives (which is sometimes once and sometimes twice a year), without letters from her to some of her relations in this remote and inhospitable region of the globe.

The springs of mineral waters are situated upon the western side of the narrow plain which we had passed, and at the very foot of the range of hills which form the

first step of the volcanic mountains which lie in this direction; and the house where we were lodged stands upon the first rise of the lowest hill, about seventy or eighty yards from one of the several pools which are here formed by the mineral water.

We paid these curiosities an early visit after our arrival. They form a little chain of miniature lakes. The largest is nearly round, and about twenty-five yards in breadth. Its depth in the centre is from four to five feet, depending upon the weather; but it gradually diminishes on all sides towards its banks. The temperature of the water at the surface while we were here varied from 28 to 32 degrees of heat; and the good people whom we were with, informed us, that 30 degrees was its average temperature at this season; but that, during the summer months, it sometimes reached to 34; and that, during the severest weather in winter, it fell occasionally as low as 25 degrees at the surface.

That the cold in winter has not more effect upon the temperature of the water, must be attributed to the constant supply of the fluid at a very high degree of heat, which is oozing continually from numerous springs at the bottom of the pools, and to the free flow of the superabundance of the water, which is carried off by a narrow stream to the river which we crossed upon the opposite side of the valley.

We lost no time after our arrival, in making a trial of these natural baths; and as there was no accommodation for undressing at the water's edge, nor other shelter than two little screens formed of dried grass to protect the bather against the stroke of the wind on either side at the instant of his stepping out of the pool, we cast off our clothes before leaving the house, and put on our *coloches*, and wrapped our furs, which we brought for the occasion, around us, and after de-

scending to the principal pool, and hanging our furs upon the stakes which supported the screens, marched in.

We found the water very buoyant, and the bottom of the pool covered with a light, loose, dark-coloured substance about six inches in depth, which rose and thickened the water to the surface where it was disturbed, but settled again in a few seconds. The smell of this deposit when taken in the hand was similar to that of the substance left within a gun after its discharge.

As the waters of these pools have not yet been analysed, it is impossible to speak with certainty of their component parts; but, coupling the character of the deposit which is found in them with their sensible and immediate effects upon those who use them, which is a headache, with some people very slight and with others more decided, after the first two or three baths, it may perhaps be concluded, that they possess a large proportion of sulphate of iron and a portion of carbonic acid gas.

The other three pools did not seem to differ from that in which we bathed, either in the temperature or quality of the water, or in any thing save their dimensions, which, as before observed, were smaller.

The season at which these baths should be taken, seems to be a point not yet so much as discussed at Petropavlovski. Nor could I learn that they had the reputation of especial virtue in the cure of any particular class of diseases. Our civilised Kamtschadale, indeed, informed us, that the inhabitants of the country from time immemorial had used them whenever they were ill; but he knew nothing of their application for any particular complaint or class of complaints. He believed, however, that they cured every body who used them of every illness whatsoever with which they were afflicted. He had never heard of

any one having taken the waters internally. I drank about a pint from the freshest spring one morning before breakfast, and about double that quantity the next morning; but I was not able to perceive any effects from these doses, and I did not think it prudent to take a larger quantity without being more certain concerning the mineral substances which the water contained.

Our manner of taking our baths, and the state of the weather at the time, will give some idea of the little regard paid to the method of their application. On the day that we arrived, the weather was fine, and we walked into the pools, as above mentioned, in the middle of the day. But upon the next day, when I awoke in the morning, I observed that it was snowing in large flakes; but finding upon inquiry, after rising, that the captain was already taking his bath, I put on my *schouba*, and descended also to the pool for the same purpose. And here the scene was certainly droll. The snow was now falling so thick, that the opposite side of the pool was not visible. But to prevent the snow from settling upon the head it is the custom to wear a cap, usually of red baize, when in the bath; and the captain was now standing in the very centre of the pool, with his head, which was alone visible, not a little magnified by the vapoury medium through which it was seen, with an inch or two of snow upon the top of his red cap. And this droll prospect was soon doubled, though there was no third party to laugh at our love of mineral bathing. We were sufficiently amused, however, in laughing at one another as we walked about the pool capped with red baize and snow and not always moving very steadily, as the feet are subject to be so scalded by the oozing of the hot water from the earth at the bottom, that the bather must either stand still, by which he will be too soon weary, or dance the polka step while immersed to his neck in the water.

The number of the baths that the captain took daily was quite an illustration of some remarks that have been before made upon the haste, and consequently imperfect manner, with which the Russians are wont to do almost every thing they undertake. The gallant officer began by taking four baths on the day after we arrived; and the second day he increased the number to six, which he continued to take every day during our stay. And so catching is every thing that is wrong, that when the captain took six baths, I could not avoid taking at least three.

Besides the natural curiosity of the mineral pools, we had the opportunity of seeing here a novelty in agricultural affairs. Among the benefits conferred upon Kamtschatka by Admiral Ricord, was the importation of potatoes for seed into the country. Such, however, has been the neglect of their cultivation, together with the rigour of the climate, that, as far as I was able to learn, they are now only to be found in very small quantities among some of the native inhabitants in the watered valleys of the River Kamtschatka, and upon this spot, where they are preserved in a novel manner. They were put in the ground many years since; but this first step towards accomplishing the objects which the admiral had in view, was, here at least, the last; for, whether owing to the ignorance of the planters or not, they were not dug up in the autumn of the same year, and being found the next year both abundant and good, they were left in the ground, where they have remained ever since, decaying and propagating continually, without being in any way affected by the seasons, and yielding always more than this family require. But in order to account for this fortunate circumstance, it must be mentioned, that although the snow covers the surface of the ground, which is frozen in winter, yet so great is the internal heat in this vol-

ic vicinity, that the earth is quite dry and never zen below a few inches from the surface. Neither mp nor frost, therefore, can reach or destroy them. e had some taken up and cooked for us on our arrival, d every day afterwards during our stay. They were a bluish colour, and in appearance and flavour, I und them resemble the sort we call kidney potatoes; ut they were in form round.

We made but two or three short excursions in our *artee* along the base of the lower hills of the mountain range during our stay here. The chief interest of our drives was, the fine views we obtained of the near and distant mountains, which in every direction save that towards the sea, presented their snow-capped volcanic cones, sometimes in the evening amidst clouds and vapours, which the setting sun so magnificently gilded that they seemed as if they were again emitting their destructive fires, and sometimes contrasting the chaste white of their summits with the deep azure of the autumnal sky.

There is perhaps no country in the world that is of more purely volcanic formation than Kamtschatka. The whole peninsula must be considered to be composed of but one vast range of volcanic mountains, and the *débris* which remains of the substances emitted during their eruption at different periods in the geological history of our planet. Many of them are still in a state of action; and earthquakes are perhaps more frequent here than in any other country. The number of shocks felt at Petropavlovski averages eight annually. The shock mentioned in the account of our voyage across the Ochotsk Sea, was also felt here, and was one of the severest remembered by the inhabitants. All those who gave me an account of this earthquake, agreed in their descriptions of it; and the commandant informed me that it endured for no less than eight

minutes. During the whole of this time, rumbling and loud noises were heard beneath the ground, and the earth trembled with frightful violence and quick motion. Some of those who experienced it, said they thought at one moment that the earth was sinking beneath them, and the sea about to rush in upon the land, and the next, that they were rising upon the crust of the crater of a volcano in terrible eruption beneath the ground.

From the crater of the Avasha, which is immediately behind Petropavlovski, have been thrown at the same time stones, lava, and water; and from the two mightiest in a state of action, Klutchewsky and Assachninsh, the ashes have been thrown beyond a hundred versts.

After a bath at day-break on the morning of the fifth day, I left my companion to take his six baths a day, which according to his calculation would infuse into his frame as much mineral in one week as the Carlsbad and Kissingen bathers imbibe in six, when they have the patience to persevere for that time. Whether the captain's calculations were just or not, I could not judge; but I was able, at least, to inform him for his encouragement, that I knew a gallant British officer at the latter of the above-mentioned places, who took sixteen tumblers full of the *rakotzy* water daily, for several weeks, without doing himself, as far as he could perceive, the least injury; and, moreover, that I saw the same officer alive three months afterwards.

## CHAP. XXXIII.

### VOYAGE ON THE RIVER PARATUNKA.—CONCLUSION.

Departure from the Springs.—Embarkation on the River Paratunka.—Aged Forests.—A Kamtschadale Farm.—Difficulties of the Descent of the River.—Enter the Bay of Avasha.—Sport.—Village of Avasha.—Character of the People.—Passage of the Bay.—Arrival at Petropavlovski.—Meeting of Friends.—Accounts of Gaieties during my Absence.—Continuation of Gaieties.—Unsettled Weather.—Symptoms of the Setting in of the Winter.—Embarkation.—Departure.

On the morning of my departure from the mineral springs, our civilised Kamtschadale drove me with his dogs as far as the River Paratunka, where we met two of the men whom we had brought with us from Petropavlovski, and who had been sent off at an early hour to prepare the canoe, as it was my intention to descend the river, in order to make a survey of a part of the country we had not seen.

On arriving at the bank of the river, I took leave of my obliging conductor, and embarked with the two half-wild fellows in their deer-skins and moccasins.

The weather was now fine, and there were yet no signs of ice; and, as the current was strong, we launched out into the middle of the river, whence we swept rapidly down the stream. The banks on both sides of us presented forests of aged birches, thinly sown, and similar to those that we had observed between the Bay of Avasha and the river. We passed jollily on for about an hour without encountering any obstruction. Here we came to the mouth of the tributary river, which falls into the Paratunka upon the left hand. On the point of land at the confluence of the two rivers, there was a piece of cultivated ground with a hut upon it; and I landed with the two Kamtschadales to take a hasty survey of

the place. A wild-looking fellow, with a moppy head and clothed in deer-skins, was standing at the door of the hut, and we accepted an invitation he gave us to walk in. Within, we found an old man and woman half clad, sitting on the ground in the midst of dirt and undistinguishable rubbish, and a girl, with hair in quantity, colour, and disorder, very much like that of the brown or grizzly bear. We remained within but a moment, however; after which we examined the farm.

The spot upon which this Kamtschadale had fixed his abode, was a wild patch of land, upon which nothing appeared to grow save a few cabbages, of which some of the stalks only were seen peeping above the snow, mingled with all kinds of the ground herbage of the country. As to implements of agriculture, there was absolutely nothing but a rude hoe. Nor was there any appearance of shelter for beasts of any kind.

When we renewed our voyage, we found the river, after the union of the two streams, much broader than before, but shallower and full of rapids; and it required all the efforts of the two strong fellows who paddled the canoe, to keep her from driving upon shoals, or bringing up and being probably upset, by great trees, which, after being thrown into the river by the violence of the wind, or by the falling of portions of the banks upon which they had flourished, rested upon the shoals and sand banks with which the river abounded, or of touching the ground and capsizing in passing down the rapids.

We had intervals, however, of a clear way and some sport. The ducks were plentiful, and appeared to be too little disturbed to have much dread of the most subtle of their enemies, and the most skilful in the arts of destruction. And while the paddlers continued to perform their duty, I was able to kill duck after duck, until we had several brace, without the sport delaying us a moment longer than was necessary to pick up the birds.

Twice our canoe took in water enough to wet us well during the passage of the rapids; but about midday we swept into the open Bay of Avasha, at its upper extremity, where we met a strong wind that had raised a sea which offered some obstruction to our progress. By keeping near the shore, however, at a late hour in the evening we gained the village of Avasha, at the foot of the mountain of the same name. We found here about a dozen houses of the same description as those of Petropavlovski; but the inhabitants, less accustomed to strangers, stood at first contemplating us, about half way between the houses and the beach, with apparently just that kind of mixed terror and respect which an *ispravnik* come to administer justice might inspire. On discovering, however, that their visitor, whatever might be his humour or objects, must be very harmless, on account of his want of the tongue of the land, they invited us to enter the best house, where I received such civilities as to leave no doubt that the two Kamtschadales that were with me had at least represented their charge to be some person of importance that had arrived at Petropavlovski.

Here we were obliged to exchange our canoe for one better adapted for rough weather; and in this we re-embarked. We had now a desperate struggle against the winds and the sea, with a rugged and steep coast under our lee, for nearly the whole of the night; during which, my own early practice in the use of the paddle admitted of my being an aid which the Kamtschadales had not dreamed of; though I perhaps did not gain in their good opinion and respect, by making efforts hardly thought by people in this state of society consistent with the dignity which they like to see those whom they serve maintain. However, we rounded the point of the inner harbour, and landed at Petropavlovski about an hour before the break of day, without experiencing any other inconvenience than a thorough wetting.

On arriving at my domicile, we found the young man that had been put at my service by the politeness of the commandant on my arrival here, already on the watch, and I learned that the Herald was to sail at day-break that very day. I therefore sent off a cask of water which I had brought with me without waiting for the day; and I had the satisfaction of receiving a note from Captain Kellet, informing me of its arrival on board after he was under weigh. Besides this cask I brought a small quantity of water from the springs to transport to Europe, but of which I am not able to report the safe arrival.

Soon after it was well day, I received a visit from my good friends Captain Rudakoff and Captain Stetzenkoff, from whom I heard an amusing account of what had passed while I had been up the country. The remote little provincial seat of government had been started from its accustomed dulness into a perfect ecstacy of delight, by the contributions of the younger officers of the Herald to the spare amusements of the inhabitants.

During the long and wearisome navigation of the Arctic Sea, our intrepid countrymen had amused themselves at intervals by dramatic performances; and in order now to return some of the attentions paid them here upon their former visit, they had given a representation of Molière's laughable comedy of *Le Médecin malgré lui*, succeeded by a ball, both of which entertainments had been honoured by the attendance of the commandant and his wife.

It was a full fortnight before the effects of this break in the dull lives of the inhabitants of Petropavlovski had in any measure subsided, and it will be many years before the officers of the Herald will be forgotten. It seemed, indeed, as if the little capital, once moved to gaiety and mirth, was unwilling to sink down to its ordinary dull level; and although there was no family

*fête* or name's day to accommodate itself to the time, a pretext to prolong the agreeable excitement was easily found. The governor had lately caused a house to be erected for new quarters for two of the officers. This had been taken possession of by the deputy-governor Stetzenkoff and Captain Vassillief, who had now returned to Petropavlovski none the worse for his baths; and it must be warmed for winter by a dance and the sounds of mirth. Mr. Knox, who had been some time known to the inhabitants as commander of the trading American ship above mentioned, was now just established for the winter as a merchant among them; and his house, too, required a consecration of a similar kind. Thus we had two more balls during my stay at Petropavlovski, at which I may say the display of good manners among the native guests was not less than the generous hospitality of the hosts.

The choice of a moment to leave a port in this high latitude is a matter of some difficulty; and the state of the weather for several previous days may not be with impunity neglected. The master of the whaler had fixed the first favourable occasion in November to brave the two restless elements, in the hope of getting a favourable offing from the firm, and too often to seamen, more dangerous third. The weather, however, was yet very unsettled. The ground had been already for several weeks covered with snow; but yet so scantily as to assure the inhabitants, that the easterly wind which had brought it, was but the precursor of the storm, which upon the eastern coast of Asia, as well as of America, usually precedes the full establishment of winter. The lake in the rear of Petropavlovski had been long frozen, while the harbour was still clear of ice. During the first two weeks in November, there were frequent but indecisive changes, and light winds from all points of the compass. The barometer at the government-house, as well as that on board the whaler,

the accuracy of which I had afterwards the opportu of attesting, continually fell with all winds, and lef doubt upon the minds of the most experienced observ that the precursory tempest was at hand. The dan however, of being frozen in and detained during winter, began, as November advanced, to counterbala the peril of tempting the unsettled elements in th little-frequented seas at this season; and a westerly w and clear weather upon the 14th of the month indu our captain to determine upon leaving the port on following day. Upon this evening, therefore, I tc leave of the commandant and his amiable wife, and the majority of my Russian and Kamtschadale frien and awaited now but the morning and the signal departure.

Early on the morning of the 15th of Novemb (our 27th), which was twelve days later than any ve sel had at any time previously left the port, I was co veyed by Captains Rudakoff and Vassillief in the com mandant's shallop, on board the whaler, now lying anchor in the open Bay of Avasha. We found th topsail to mast and the anchor a-peak as we reache the ship. The moment for quitting the port and th empire was now come. But before my companions re turned to the shore, we plighted our faith in one another's friendship, which, I doubt not, will, on their part as well as my own, be long maintained.

The topsail of the whaler was now filled; and as the shallop conveyed the Russian captains on shore, the favourable gale carried the ship towards the open sea; and, before the sun went down, we were fairly on our voyage.

THE END.

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